

MONOPOLY & DEMOCRACY

THE LAND QUESTION
OF VICTORIA.

Ernest Beez

By F. ANSTEY, M.P.

ILLUSTRATED WITH MAPS

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1906.

VICTORIA.—The Closer Settlement Act of 1904.



FEW POINTS OF INTEREST as to what has been done under this form of legislation may prove of interest, and the digest of the present Regulations in the following paragraphs will enable anyone interested to understand the conditions which govern allotments held under the Act.

Under Part 3 of the Land Act of 1898 (the portion governing Closer Settlement) the following purchases were made:—Wando Vale Estate, 10,446 acres; Whitfield Estate, 4246 acres; and Eurack Estate, 5108 acres, at a cost of £208,288. These estates were subdivided into 192 farm allotments, all of which are now in occupation, and support a population of at least 1000.

Since the passing of the present Act, the Lands Purchase Board has purchased 11 country estates, and acquired 2462 acres of Crown lands, representing a value of £795,675, and embracing an area of 167,342 acres. Those that have been subdivided were made available in 505 farm allotments, of which only six are at present available, and the population on these allotments must exceed considerably 2000 persons.

As regards Workmen's Homes allotments, up to date the total area purchased for this purpose, viz.:—243 acres at a total cost of £12,721 has been subdivided into 290 allotments, out of which only three are at the present time available.

Three of the estates acquired by the Board, Weribee Park, Lara and Tandarra, costing £368,670, and embracing an area of 36,301 acres, it is expected will be made available for application about the end of the year, or in the beginning of 1907.

The principal regulations governing Closer Settlement allotment are summarised in the following paragraphs, which deal only with the main points at issue:—

"To be eligible to hold a lease under the Act an applicant must be of the full age of 21 years, and the principle laid down is one man one allotment. The term of the lease may be extended over 31½ years, and the maximum value of land that can be held by any one individual is £1500 for a farm allotment, £200 for an agricultural labourer's allotment, and £100 for a workman's home site.

"The deposit necessary in all cases is 3 per cent. of the capital value of the allotment applied for to which must be added £1 for the preparation of the lease, and 5s. for registration fee. This deposit includes the first instalment of purchase money, subsequent repayments are made at the rate of 3 per cent. of the value of the allotment every six months.

"Unsuccessful applicants are returned the whole of their deposit, less the registration fee. Generally speaking, preference is given to a landless applicant over one who owns land or occupies land with the right to acquire the fee simple of it.

"If existing improvements are charged separately from the land, on payment of the valuation a permit is immediately issued. Residence on the allotment is compulsory, but a lessee may be granted leave of absence not exceeding four months in any one year.

"Each Lessee must pay all rates, taxes, or assessments levied on or payable in respect of his allotments. During the first six years of the lease he cannot transfer, assign, sublet or mortgage the whole or any part of his allotment. Provided all the covenants of the lease have been fully complied with, a lessee may obtain the freehold of his allotment at the end of any half year after the first 12 years have expired on payment of the balance of purchase money due and the necessary grant fees.

"Conditions are made with regard to the destruction of vermin, conservation and planting of trees, making and clearing of drains and watercourses.

"Improvements to the value of at least two instalments of the purchase money must be effected on each farm allotment before the end of the first year from the date of lease, and 10 per cent of the purchase money before the end of the third year, and a further 10 per cent. before the end of the sixth year. In the case of agricultural labourers' allotments, a substantial dwelling-house to the value of at least £30 must be erected within one year from the date of lease, and the land fenced within two years from the said date, and in the case of Workmen's Homes allotments a substantial dwelling house, to the value of at least £50, must be erected within one year from the date of the lease, and substantial improvements, to the value of a further £25, before the end of the second year.

"Advances, on the £1 for £1 principle, may be granted to assist in building, etc., to the amount of £50 to lessee of Agricultural Labourers' and Workmen's Homes Allotments. Such advances, together with 5 per cent. interest thereon, must be repaid in equal half-yearly instalments, extending over a period not exceeding sixteen years."

Applications to the Secretary of Lands Purchase Board, Public Offices, Melbourne, Victoria, will be replied to by return of post, giving the fullest information available on any matter which comes under the control of the Board.

INTRODUCTION.



THESE ARTICLES UPON LAND SETTLEMENT set out to examine this question:—

Is it true that during the last quarter of a century farm holdings have declined in this State?

The latest statistics available at the time were utilised, but others have been recently issued. It was inevitable that they should, to some extent change the figures, but they do not in any way invalidate the conclusions. The records for 1904 can, therefore, stand as the statistical basis of these articles.

But the latest returns (1906) are interesting. We have alluded to date 25,000,000 acres. The owners are few—the occupiers are 52,987. The distribution is as under:—

Holdings.				P.C. Area occupied. P.C.			
(A) 200 acres and under				51	27,171	1,928,178	8
(B) 201 to 503 acres				36	13,530	4,500,040	18
(C) 504 to 1000 acres				15	7,688	5,414,477	21
(D) Over 1000 acres				5	4,498	12,920,250	53
4498 (D) hold more land than the other 48,489				100	52,987	24,762,943	100
Within Class D there are 415 persons who hold as much land as the 41,000 in Classes A and B.							
And 79 persons hold more than the 27,000 in Class A.							

These facts speak louder than bare denial. The mammoth holdings dominate the older districts. They push settlement into the back country. They

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are an impediment to industrial progress—raise the cost of transit upon producers and the price of commodities to consumers—retard development, limit the financial resources of municipalities, and impose in a variety of ways a heavy monetary burden upon the general community.

During the last two years the bounteous seasons and the good markets for crops and stock and dairy produce have brought about a boom in farming lands. The net increase of holdings upon alienated areas has been 3985. Yet it is remarkable that these increases are mostly in the remote areas. The subdivisional activity on our older territory, of which we hear and read so much, is doing nothing more than covering up the blanks created by silent, continuous and insidious aggregation that uses no advertisement nor blare of trumpets to mark its progression. We have during the last two years alienated 738,000 additional acres, and this additional area of alienation largely accounts for the temporary increase of holdings.

Since the purchase of Wando Vale in March, 1900, we have established 700 holdings upon 150,000 acres at a cost of over one million pounds. During the same period we have thrown millions of acres of Crown lands upon the market, and inflated our revenue with the proceeds from the sale of public assets. Last year (1905) we derived from this source £920,386—the largest amount from land sales since 1857. The amount of settlement when compared with the immense volume of Crown lands placed upon the market has been insignificant and inadequate.

When Mr. Prendergast, at the Eight Hours demonstration in 1905, made his reference to the decline of farm holdings in this State, the "Age" ridiculed his statement as "wholly inaccurate," and, like the "Argus," asserted that there was an increase and not a decrease. Facts were nothing; to discredit the Labor Leader was everything. But eighteen months later the forgetful "Age" came out (Nov. 17, 1906) with this statement:—

"Each year there are fewer farmers left in the older settled districts of Victoria. In the Wimmera district, for instance, the area of original selections was 320 acres, and a settler occupied nearly every block. At present the average farm in the Wimmera is probably over 1000 acres and **the area of each individual holding is becoming larger**, because in the majority of instances the transfer of the land from seller to buyer means that the latter is increasing the area he already holds."

No comment is necessary, but the confession is opportune.

In conclusion. This is not a case where an individual sets out to write a book. For that he would gather his material, array his facts, marshal his arguments, and move in an orderly and sequent manner to a designed conclusion. But in this it was otherwise. There was first an article in defence of a friend; not that he needed defence, but as a

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proof that in the arsenal of statistical facts there was justification for all that friend had said. In the gathering up of the material for that one article there was obtained sufficient for another. A map was suggested as a valuable means of elucidation, and at once there was found the need for more than one. Each investigation opened up fresh streams of information, very often upon aspects of the question already dealt with in preceding articles. Thus the subject, once started, speedily widened out to an extent not thought of at the commencement, and the work of research occupied time far beyond anything contemplated. From time to time an article was written or a map published, and thrown into the arena of political controversy. The enemy were calling for facts, as brigands call for blood, and we gave them as we got them. There is no literary merit, nor order of advance, and no apology—simply a collection of facts and justifiable deductions. Friends have requested their publication in book form—and it is so.

F. ANSTET.

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Settlement as a Business.

W. S. KEAST, MEMBER FOR DANDENONG

Recognises that Land sold in Small Lots for Agricultural purposes possesses a higher value than when disposed of in large areas for merely Pastoral occupation. Upon the basis of this fact he vigorously conducts his commercial operations. Large estates pass beneath his hammer, and whenever permissible he casts aside the old "Sell in One Lot" system for a cutting up policy, thus **increasing the number of competitive buyers and realising for his clients a higher price** than would be otherwise be possible.

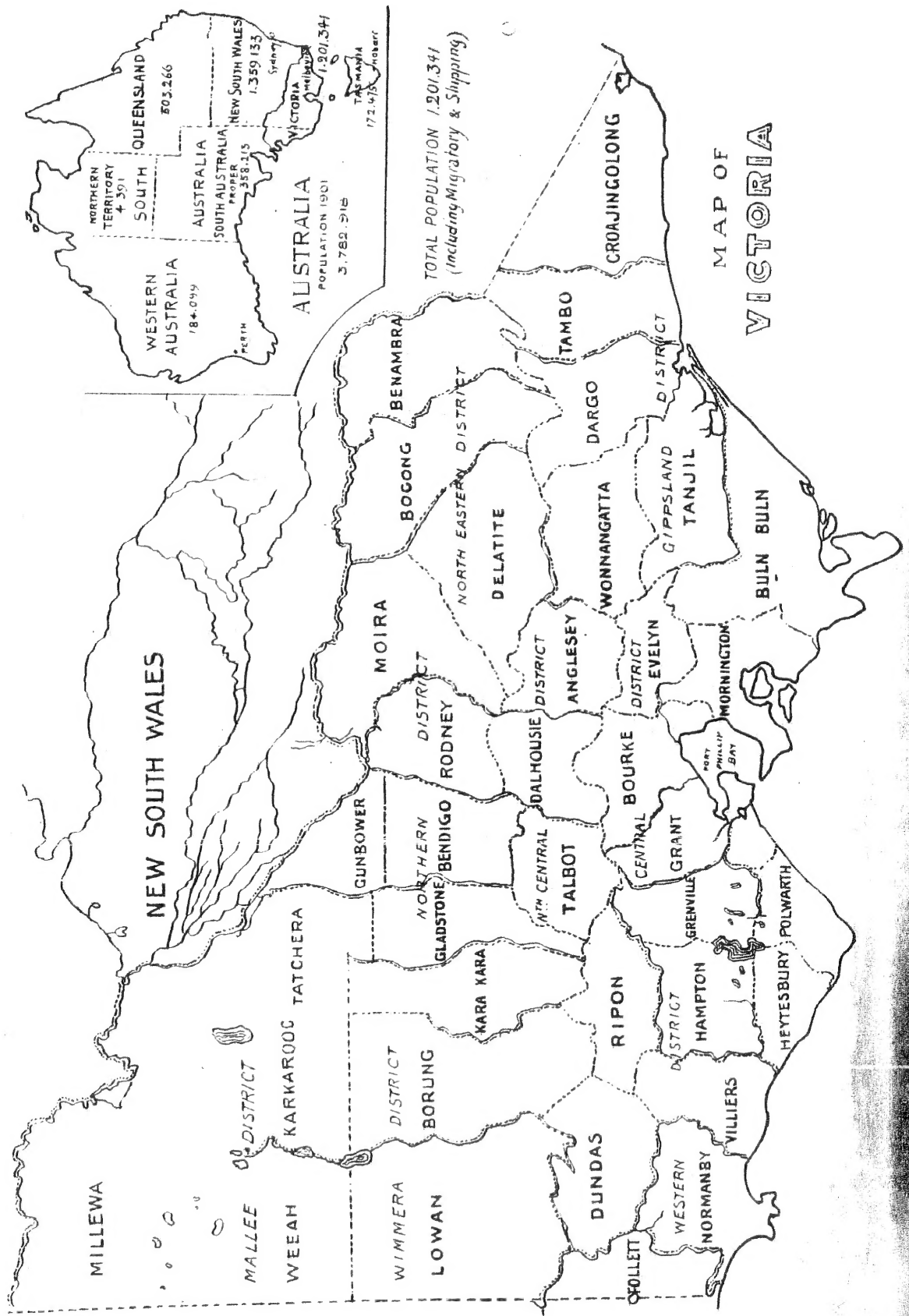
It was W. S. KEAST who in the latter end of 1902 cut up the Stanhope Estate at Rushworth, cut up the Springs and the Rockbank Estates belonging to the Clarkes, and 1904 sub-divided a large portion of Werribee for G. T. Chirnside at prices varying from £6 to £28 per acre, working out at an average of £12 17s. 6d. per acre.

Six weeks later he conducted a large sub-divisional sale of Werribee land for Mr. Percy Chirnside realising an average of £17 on prices ranging from £5 to £38 per acre, no less than sixty per cent. of the area selling for over £20 per acre. Scores of other properties have passed through his hands all having realised for their owners higher prices than could have been obtained if sold as undivided pastoral properties. Many of the trust estates sub-divided for Agricultural purposes realised under the hammer more than twice the amount for which they were valued for purposes of probate.

Mr. KEAST'S work is not confined to Victoria. He operates in all States. His last and largest undertaking being the sub-division of Buckingbong, near Narrandara, in the Riverina. In this State he has now in hand some 50,000 acres recently sub-divided, and within a few weeks to be placed under the hammer.

Surveyors are out on several other properties in various parts of the State, including one within twenty-five miles of Melbourne, so that intending buyers have a wide choice of situation. Those who desire information on land matters cannot do better than call at 610 Collins Street. They will hear of the very latest and the very best.

W. S. KEAST & CO.,
COLLINS STREET (near Spencer Street), CITY.





MONOPOLY AND DEMOCRACY

BY

FRANK ANSTEY

CHAPTER I

MAP I.—COUNTIES OF HAMPDEN, RIPON, and GRENVILLE.

The Territory shown on Map No. 1, in the Appendix, is within the Counties of Hampden, Ripon and Grenville. The Statistics in relation to those Counties are as under:—

Year.	Population.	Agricultural, Dairying & Pas- toral Occupiers.	Acres Cultivated.	Acres Held.
1871	82,100	3,617	123,609	2,180,000
1904	71,160	2,317	122,121	2,287,000

In these Counties there is more land held and less cultivated—there are fifteen hundred fewer families in occupation, and eleven thousand less people—than 33 years back. Even the smaller area cultivated is operated for the most part by tenant farmers who have no ownership in the land they work.

The above given population includes that of Ballarat and Ararat. The population of shires only is 36,215 against 45,800 in 1871. The population on the areas covered by these large estates is insignificant.

At Skipton there is a farmer (John Gardiner) with 2000 acres. He has so improved his land that for six months in the year that portion carries 18 sheep to the acre, and his wheat crops average between 24 to 30 bushels per acre. He is therefore taxed twice as much per acre as the owners of the large estates round about him.

Two months ago, in rummaging through some old statistics, the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Prendergast) came hastily to the conclusion that there had been a decline of over 5,000 farm holdings in Victoria during 25 years. We explained to him that *he had compared things which differed, and had therefore fallen into a palpable blunder, from which common knowledge of the advance of agricultural settlement and production should have protected him.*

Argus, June 25th, 1905.

It is a matter of "common knowledge" borne out by the statistics of every Modern State, that the extended use of machinery and the extension of large scale methods of production, enable that production to proceed with an ever diminishing ratio of producers.

It is a matter of "common knowledge" that in proportion as land monopoly advances, Agriculture either recedes or moves to new territory or changes its form from that of a free-holding yeomanry, to that of tenant farming.

It is a matter of "common knowledge" that Manufactures may and do advance without corresponding increase in factories; and that agricultural output may and does advance without corresponding increase in the number of fields and homesteads. Factories are fewer but larger—the output greater. Farms fewer but larger—the output greater. So that increase in production of any kind does not of necessity mean advance in "settlement." In factory production the modern "Trust" is the supreme manifestation of the tendency to aggregation, and it is a fact borne out by statistics, that monopoly and machinery combine to accelerate that tendency amongst the primary producers. The American Bonanza Farm is the supreme manifestation of that tendency in agriculture.

Facts and Fat

The Agricultural Statistics of Victoria present the following facts as to the occupation of the alienated areas and the farm holdings thereon:—

Year.	Holdings "occupied."	Acres "occupied."
1880	48,969	16,620,900
1881	49,637	18,141,124
1893	43,768	20,577,167

The area in occupation therefore increased by millions of acres; but upon the wider area there were 5,200 fewer "holdings" than in 1880 and 5,800 fewer than in 1881. The leader of the Labor Opposition during his speech at the 8

the counties of Bendigo, Borung, Gladstone, Grant, Gunbower, Kara Kara, Lowan, Moira and Talbot is 23,212 square miles. The acreage in occupation in March 1904, was 10,081,000, and the total holdings of all descriptions were 17,297 against 23,287 in 1881, when the area in occupation was only 7,585,000 acres. The holdings were actually fewer than in 1884 when only cultivated "Holdings" were counted—the numbers then being 19,086 against 17,237 at present so that, in a comparison of 1904 with 1884, the fact stands out that over one-fourth of the state there are 1849 fewer holdings upon 2½ millions more acres in occupation.

A comparison of the years 1883-4-5 or 6 with the year 1903 demonstrates that the area under cultivation in many of the older counties actually declined, and that in other counties, while the cultivated area increased, the holdings diminished.

The Settler Moves Out

The fact is that agriculture has stagnated or declined in the older settled districts, and developed upon newly selected territory upon which the forces of monopoly have not yet fully seized. The development of these new areas has helped to cover the depopulation and recess of agriculture in the older districts. The movement of land settlement in Victoria during the last 40 years, may be epitomised thus: 1861 to 1871.

TOTAL POPULATION, 1871—731,528.

This was the period during which population and settlement spread rapidly throughout the West, the Central Counties of Anglessey, Talbot, and Dalhousie, and the Gippsland (County of Tangal (Lakes District)).

1871 to 1881.

TOTAL POPULATION, 1881—892,346.

Decline of settlement in the Western District. Decline in the Central Counties.

Settlement moves north into the Wimmera, and into the Northern District Counties of Gladstone, Gunbower, Rodney, and Moira.

1881 to 1891.

TOTAL POPULATION, 1891—1,140,405.

Continued decline of population throughout Western and Central Counties.

Decline commences in Wimmera (Kara Kara), and Northern District (Gladstone and Rodney). Settlement extends into County Lowan and Southern Gippsland.

1891 to 1901.

TOTAL POPULATION, 1901—1,201,341.

Decline throughout Wimmera. Settlement moves further north—into the Mallee. Decline in Central Counties.

Decline in the Northern Counties of Gunbower, Gladstone and Rodney. Stagnation in Moira. Settlement moves out North East into the Bogong.

Effect of land monopoly in Tangal County showing itself in decline of population in Rose-dale and Taralgon Shires.

Revival of settlement in the Western Shires of Colac and Hampden due to several large landholders renting a portion of their runs for dairying purposes.

This in brief is the history of land settlement in Victoria, steady retreat of the expropriated, into the most distant and least favored portions of the State, before the untrammelled march of monopoly and the mortgage.

Make a comparison of the Agricultural situation as it existed in this State during the month of March in the year 1881 and 1904. In the latter year there was made an extension of the basis of collection that places the impartiality of the comparison beyond question. In the year 1881 all crown land tenants were excluded from calculation. Crown lands were not counted. "Holdings" upon alienated land that were occupied only for timber cutting, scrub cutting, clearing or fencing or other such work were not counted. Holdings were only counted as "occupied" when used "for agricultural" or the carrying of live stock, and the area so occupied was eighteen million acres. The land settlement statistics for 1904 included:—

1st. All occupied holdings whether used for agricultural, pastoral, timber cutting or other purposes.

2nd. All the unoccupied holdings upon alienated territory.

3rd. For the first time in the history of the State all the Crown land leaseholdings embracing over seven million acres (not including temporary grazing licences or mining leases).

4th. The total area of Crown and private lands so included was over thirty one million acres or thirteen million acres more than in 1881; and the "holdings" were given as 49,002 as against 49,637 in 1881 a decline of 635 after counting in unoccupied "holdings" as occupied, and counting in Crown land holdings that in 1881 were excluded.



CHAPTER II.

MAP 2.—COUNTIES OF BOURKE AND GRANT.

The Territory shown on Map No. 2, includes the two Counties of Bourke and Grant. Their area is 2,267,200 acres, and the population Statistics are as under:—

COUNTY OF BOURKE.

Melb. and Suburbs (cities, towns and boroughs)..... Aire Shire, Smyth, Ereton, Heidelberg, Boroondara, Yuna- mulling, Doncaster, Melton, Templestowe, Mooroona and Dun- gong, Other Shires in County Bourke.....	POPULATION.			
	Area in Acres	1871	1881	1891
	61,408	196,033	307,515	464,965
	135,520	16,539	17,273	31,074
	884,512	24,206	22,794	20,970
	1,101,440	256,778	307,582	317,009
				522,934
				36,722
				20,070
				522,934

COUNTY OF GRANT.

Geelong, Queenscliff and Bass Coast	Area in Acres	1871	1881	1891	1901
Shires in County Grant ..	1,158,963	39,107	56,669	42,344	44,979
		34,721	29,494	27,255	26,055
	1,165,760	73,828	66,153	69,599	71,034

(38,713), and the number of "Holdings" (49,002). This is, because the "Holdings" have been inflated by the means which we have already described. On the other hand selectors whose land is not ready for the plough or who want money for implements or stock or to pay the storekeeper, go out to augment their income as road contractors or fencers, miners, carriers, station hands or ought else that comes along. At the Census they record themselves according to the occupations they are following. Thus their bits of territory are recorded as "Holdings," but they are not counted as farmers. It, however, matters not whether we take the Census returns as to "Holdings"; both bespeak the one fact of stagnation and decline. Nor can it be repeated too often that the fewer "Holdings" have a grasp upon an immensely wider area of the national territory.

Now take the Statistics of the counties and divide Victoria into two portions.

1st. Those counties in which "Holdings" have diminished.

2nd. Those counties in which "Holdings" have increased—not forgetting that the areas dealt with cover 13 million more acres than in 1881, and ought consequently to show an immense increase in "Holdings."

* * *

Counties of Victoria in which the number of Land Holdings diminished:—

Area, 44,509 square miles.

	1881	1904
Anglesey	774	621
Bendigo	2,049	1,808
Bogong	1,808	1,063
Borong	2,653	2,350
Bourke	4,009	3,763
Dalhousie	1,788	1,359
Delatite	1,547	1,492
Dundas	593	635
Follett	281	227
Gladstone	2,016	1,323
Grant	3,253	2,561
Grenville	1,323	1,068
Gunbower	1,326	836
Kara Kara	3,090	1,374
Mora	3,965	3,121
Normanby	1,157	1,261
Ripon	820	599

Rodney	1,879	1,600
Talbot	3,217	2,521
Tangil	1,128	1,291
Villiers	1,604	1,553
Wonnangatta	152	135
Total	41,032	33,161

Area occupied in above counties:—

831

1904

Private Lands	14,502,650	10,534,099
Crown Lands	Not counted	2,516,152

Total 14,502,650 19,050,251

Thus upon 4,348,201 more acres in the above counties there are 7,871 fewer "Holdings."

If the above comparison had been made with 1903 (Crown leases excluded as in 1881) the decline of "Holdings" over the above territories would show as 10,503. In 1903, the return of "Holdings" from Dundas and Normanby were 495 and 883 respectively—a fall from 1881 of 362; but by the inclusion of over 800,000 acres (Crown leases, unoccupied Holdings and Pastoral Properties) the return of "Holdings" for 1904 were jumped up by 508, and made to exhibit a small increase over 1881, although the area under cultivation in these counties and the actually cultivated "Holdings" have largely diminished. In 1881 there was in the above territory an average of 2,830 "Holdings" for each million acres in occupation, and in 1904 only 1,745, demonstrating the double process of decadence and aggregation.

* * *

1881 and 1904

In the North (Central Counties of Anglesey, Dalhousie and Talbot, there was an increase of 414,567 acres in occupation, and a decrease of 1,278 in the number of holdings.

In the Northern District (Counties of Glenbower, Gladstone, Bendigo, Rodney, and Mora, there was an increase of 590,194 acres in occupation and a decrease of 3,147 in the number of holdings.

In the Western Counties of Normanby, Villiers, Dundas, Ripon, and Follett, we had 833,433 more acres in occupation, and 180 fewer holdings.

In the three Wimmera Counties—Lohan, Borong, Kara Kara—we had 1,132,761 more acres in occupation and 1,794 fewer holdings.

Counties (mainly Malles, Gippsland, and Beech Forest Counties), in which land holdings increased:—

Area, 43,375 square miles.

	1881	1904
Benambra	425	504
Bulu Bulu	1,793	3,942
Croislingalong	68	241
Dargo	285	366
Evelyn	922	1,007
Hampden	520	650
Heytesbury	579	917
Karkarac	12	1,218
Lohan	1,118	1,343
Millewa and Weeah	2	79
Mornington	1,568	2,326
Polwarth	477	1,088
Tambo	137	226
Tatchera	699	1,434
Total	8,005	13,841

Area occupied in above Counties:—

1881

1904

Private Lands	3,638,474	7,490,690
Crown Lands	Not counted	4,535,671

Total 3,638,474 12,026,361

Upon the territory covered by the above counties there was an increase of 8,388,000 acres in occupation (230 per cent.). There was an increase in the number of "Holdings" by 7,236 (84 per cent.); but the increase of "Holdings," as can be seen, was in no way proportioned to the increase in the areas held. In the territories embraced in these counties there was in 1881 for each million acres in occupation an average of 2,400 "Holdings." By 1904 the proportions had fallen to 1,320 per million acres. This again demonstrates the development of large Holdings, even upon comparatively new territory.

* * *

Official Reports

(Quite recently (1905) the Statist took a census of the number and sizes of the individual holdings in Victoria (alienated land and crown leases), and the result is as under:— 3 per cent of our land occupants hold 45 per cent of the land; 32 per cent of our land occupants hold 43 per cent of the land; 65 per cent of our land occupants hold only 12 per cent of the land.

* * *

In the same volume, an officer of the Forestry Department (H. Mackay) reports that the re-tention of the fine volcanic lands of the western district "as a vast sheep walk, has had an evil effect upon the proper settlement of Victoria," and that "not the least mischievous result has been that land selectors had to endeavour to make homes for themselves in the thick Virgin Forest of the Otway Peninsula and Western Gippsland, thus destroying by axe and fire in a few years enormous areas covered with valuable hardwood as well as woods of fine grain."

At one end of the land scale there are 18,342 persons holding an average of 30 acres the total is 575,622 acres.

At the other end there are 1467 persons holding an average of 10,000 acres totalling 14,486,901 acres.

There are also 8166 persons holding 9,310,000 acres, so that, putting these two last sections together, we have in Victoria 9633 persons holding 23,796,000 acres, or 75 per cent of the total area of the State.

It is asserted that these records do not imply monopoly because the poor Crown lands are let in immense areas for grazing. This is only a part of the truth. The whole truth is that between 7 and 8 million acres of Crown lands are included in the lands "occupied," that these lands are let not in a few large holdings but in thousands of holdings, large and small, under a variety of leases and for all sorts of purposes—that by these means the "holdings" during the last two years have been increased by 8830—the object being to cloak the actual decadence of holdings upon the privately owned lands of the State, and to prove the Labour Party wrong when it asserts that Land Monopoly is an ever increasing evil.

In the Year Book for 1903 (page 324) the Government Statist made use of these words:—

"Those districts which are apparently least designed by nature for the purpose of cultivation, are those which show the greatest area under tillage, while those districts which lying close to the seaboard, enjoy a fairly uniform rainfall throughout the year, and which may be said to court the acquaintance of the husbandman, are used almost entirely for grazing stock over land still under natural pastures."

Again in one of the recent publications of the Lands Department, an officer (H. O. Allan) reports :—

"It is a fact that the maps of many of the early settled parishes, subdivided as they originally were into numerous valuable farm sections, present the appearance of so many draught-board squares, from which the men are missing—the land of whole parishes having become, in many instances, merged in one large estate, the property of one person."

Such are the statements of responsible officers of the Crown, recorded in Government documents and publications. But they are passed without comment by those who have an interest in the maintenance of existing conditions, with the hope that the gaze of the general public will never rest upon their pages. When the Labor Party turns to discover how those statements are in agreement with recorded facts, and gives the results of its investigations to the public for consideration, when silence no longer avails, the facts are denied, the records impugned, and the man who can't see human settlement on blank plains and sheep walks is said to be blind.

It may be asked "Is it not a fact that the area under cultivation has increased since 1881, from 1,997,943 acres to over 4,000,000?"

"It is."

"Is it not a fact that the number of men engaged in the agricultural, dairying and pastoral industries, have increased since 1881 from 77,000 to 162,000?"


"It is."

"Well then, if the area under cultivation is increasing and the number of men engaged thereon is increasing, must it not be (as the *Argus* put it) a matter of 'common knowledge' that the number of farm 'holdings' must also increase?"

"Not in the least. These things are not of necessity either synonymous or co-existent, and under modern conditions are very seldom so."

* * *

The Machine and the Crop

The counties of Barung, Kara Kara, Gladstone and Moira, with their 11,500 square miles of territory—their stagnant or declining populations their decreasing farm holdings—present us with the spectacle of a steadily increasing area of production side by side with a steadily diminishing number of agricultural properties, increase of casual laborers and a disappearing yeomanry. Aggregation is marching, farm is being joined to farm, and the expropriation of the small farmer may and does proceed side by side with an increase of the area utilised for the production of agricultural wealth.  Far has this policy of monopoly operated in Victoria, that whereas at the census of 1881, only the 77,000 men then engaged upon the soil, in every 100 were farmers "working on their own or employing labor," at the last census (1901) the proportion had fallen to 37 in every 100. The actual decrease of holdings in the older settled districts, is, as already shown, to be counted by thousands, and whatever there is of increase is to be found in the new territory opened up for settlement. To the extent that the State has opened up new territory, and created new farm holdings, the actual extent of the buying out operations in old districts has been hidden. But the State has never (not even under its present closer settlement law) done anything more than pour water into a tank from which the water is rapidly running at the other end. Every subdivision of an estate is announced with a blast of trumpets, but aggregation moves silently, and with greater rapidity than the subdivisional action.

Eight Western Shires.

MAP No. 3 - COUNTIES DUNDAS, NORMANBY, FOLLETT and VILLIERS.

THE total area shown on Map No. 3 is 4,340,000 acres. In 1871 the area *utilised* amounted to 1,649,000 acres, the area under cultivation 78,000 acres, and the holders 3701. The census of that year gave the holders as 3890, of whom 3254 were occupiers of 350 acres and under. The total area of occupied Crown lands and private lands are shown on Map. Since 1871 an additional area of 1,034,000 acres has drifted into private hands, but 10,000 acres have gone out of cultivation, the holders have diminished to 3676, and a larger proportion are tenant farmers than in the first mentioned year.

Since 1881 the construction of railways and other public works has increased the value of salable property, but the ratepayers on the rolls are yearly 700 fewer. There has been no increase in homes, farms, cultivation or population. The only increases have been in sheep and cattle. 1,057,000 acres, mainly heath lands, still remain in the possession of the Crown, but there is no publicly-defined policy for its development.



CHAPTER III.

The Population Slump

Between Port Phillip Bay and the South Australian Border there are the ten Western Counties of Grant, Grenville, Polwarth, Ripon, Hampden, Heytesbury, Dundas, Normanby, Villiers, and Follet, embracing an area of 15,545 square miles, or 10,000,000 acres. In these Counties there are five mining towns—Ararat, Ballarat (City), Scarsdale, Smythesdale, and Sebastapol; five seaports—Port Fairy, Portland, Warrnambool, Queenscliff, and Geelong; two interior towns—Koroit and Hamilton, all of which have municipal government apart from Shires. The sites of these Municipalities take up 25,000 acres out of a total of 10,000,000.* The Shires, therefore, occupy 994 per cent. of the total area of the Western Counties and their population was, at the taking of the decennial census, as follows:—

1871117,416
1881103,469
1891101,306
1901111,454.

The recovery of 10,000 in population between 1891 and 1901 was brought about by the expansion of mining on the Pittfield Plains, (Grenville Shire), by the operations of the Metropolitan Board in Wyndham Shire, by the opening up of the Otway Peninsula, by the share farming on runs at Wickliffe and Maroona, and by the letting of portions of sheep runs for dairy pur-

*Population of 12 towns above-mentioned—

187185,316
188179,164
189180,082
190183,300

Population of these towns added to population of Shires gives total population of Western District, at each decennial period.

poses in the vicinity of Terang, Colac and Camperdown. This last action increased the population of the Shires of Hampden and Colac by nearly 5,000. But the population of these Western Counties, towns and shires together, is larger than it was 35 years ago; and the population of the Shires is still 6,000 below the figures of 1871. Every child born within the territory during that period has had to find a living elsewhere. This does not arise from the fact that our western territory is in any way crowded. Mountainous Switzerland with a large portion of its area covered in perpetual snow, or too steep for cultivation, is no larger than our Western District, yet it finds sustenance for a population three times that of all Victoria. Denmark is smaller than our Western District, yet it carries over 2,000,000 people. Holland is one-third smaller, yet it carries a population of four and a quarter millions. During the period 1871 to 1891, while the population of other parts of Victoria was rapidly increasing, the Western District was undergoing a process of rapid depopulation. In 1871 the Western Counties carried 28 per cent. of the population; in 1881, 21 per cent.; in 1891, 16½ per cent.; and in 1901, from causes mentioned, a revival to 17½ per cent.

* * *

Men v. Monopoly

In 1871 there were in the Western District, 11843 holders, who held 5,190,082 acres. In 1881 there were 10,607 holders, who held 6,076,200 acres. In 1901 the total agricultural, dairy, mining, and pastoral holders were 10,459, and they held between them 6,838,756 acres. In 1871 the area under cultivation was 315,604 acres. In

1881 the area under cultivation was only 281,285 acres. From that on, cultivation steadily declined. In recent years, owing to the causes to which we have referred, there has been a revival; but in only one year (1904) did the area under cultivation surpass that of 1871, and in the majority of the Western Counties the area under cultivation is still below that of the first year mentioned. Between 1884 and 1894 the actual cultivators in the Western District declined by over a thousand, and the land under cultivation in the latter year was nearly a 100,000 acres below that of the year 1871.

How insignificant is the amount of cultivation in the Western District, may be seen by a comparison with the North Eastern County of Moira. Moira has only one-fourth the area, yet has fifty per cent. more land under the plough, cultivated only in the partial manner of Moira (and there is no natural reason why more should not be done); the Western Shires would have 2,000,000 additional acres under the plough, 5,000 more farm holdings, and 64,000 more people. What that must mean to the ports of Warrnambool and Geelong—to the railways, to the revenues of the State, to the commercial class and the manufacturing industries—no man needs telling.

Monopoly is a Tax on Production

Be it here noted that the decline of population, of cultivation and holdings, in this territory was not the outcome of any policy of the Labor Party, but of the policy that preceded its advent. Secondly, the value of land in the Western District has been increased by millions, not by any increase of population, not by the improved productive uses to which the soil has been put, but by the expenditure of public money upon ports and harbors, and the construction of lines and other public works and facilities. The interest upon these millions, with the loss upon lines running through territory peopled mainly by sheep, has not only meant taxation upon producers in all parts of the State, but it means that so long as *Parliament refuses to impose a tax upon landed monopoly, so long must Railway Commissioners impose upon growers of produce throughout the agricultural regions a higher freight charge than would otherwise be necessary.*

The Western Rails

The disastrous effect of monopoly upon the revenues of the State railways has been already illustrated in the columns of the "Tocsin." In an article (April 28, 1904) I made use of these words:—

Excluding the four terminals—Ballarat, Ararat, Warrnambool, and Geelong—the population and the amount of production on the areas served may be gauged by the passenger and goods traffic earnings at the stations between the terminals. The Geelong to Ballarat line is 534 miles—the stations 10, the passenger fares taken, £4431, so that on a line costing £35,491 per mile to construct, the passenger earnings per mile are 4s 6d per day.

From Ballarat to Ararat is 57 miles, the stations eight, the yearly passenger earnings £3006, of which Beaufort, fed by the Raglan mines, contributes 60 per cent. Upon this line, costing £247 per mile, the passenger earnings per mile are 3s 10d per day.

The line from Ararat to Koroit is 96½ miles, and cost £404,000. Of this line 164 miles, between Dunkeld and Peshhurst, costing £60,000, had to be pulled up, passengers and goods being sent along the two sides of a triangle through Hamilton, because Ritchie and Silas Harding preferred to keep the land under sheep, and walk those sheep to market, rather than truck them. On the first section of this line, 47½ miles, Ararat to Dunkeld, cost, £230,000—the passenger earnings per mile are 2s 6d per day. On the section, Dunkeld to Peshhurst, there is £60,000 lost capital, a perpetual interest charge upon such capital, and no earnings. On the third section, Peshhurst to Koroit—cost of construction £114,000—the passenger earnings per mile are 9d per day. Warrnambool to Geelong, with the two northern branches, Mortlake and Beac, is 145 miles—cost of construction £980,000, the stations 27—the fares collected in a year £21,000, of which two-thirds were collected at Terang, Camperdown and Colac.

showing what even a little semi-settlement can do for a railway. On this line the passenger fares, therefore, mounted up to a daily average of 11s per mile. The average over all the lines dealt with, less the terminals, was, for each mile, 4s 9d per day.

How little a squatter-ridden district contributes to the goods traffic of our lines may be gauged by a comparison with agricultural and mining areas. The stations upon the lines mentioned gathered up 117,000 tons of freight. The 160 miles of Niumukah line, the 72 miles from Violet Town to Kilmore, the 44 miles of mining country between Daylesford and Creswick, each gave our lines as much freight as the 350 miles in the Western district. Even in the drought-stricken Mallee Year 1902—the 64 miles between Cornbury Tanks and Hopecom gave our railways 68,000 tons of freight, or three times as much per mile as the squatter-owned West.

The most bountiful seasons that Nature may confer can never make sheep country profitable to Railways. For that purpose Men and Products are essential.

Cost of Monopoly.

As we stand at present, produce raisers throughout the State pay freight charges, not only to cover the transport cost of their own commodities, but to cover the loss in districts that raise no produce, and furnish no freight. When a 100 miles of sheep walk stands between the farmer and his market, it is inevitable that the cost of transportation over that vacant territory (unless made up out of taxation) must be paid by the grower, and every additional

agricultural appliance that he purchases pays in added freight the cost of land monopoly. More farmers mean not only more population and less taxation upon each, but they mean more produce, more freight for the lines, and lower charges. Says the Government Statist (Year-book, 1903, page 326), "The Government of fifteen millions of people would add very little to the present cost of administration, and railway facilities would require but little extra expense to meet the wants of the larger population."

Stickney, in his "Railway Problems," says:—"When once a railroad is built trains must run, and it makes very little difference in the cost of the business whether the cars go full or empty."

And Wellington, in his "Economic Theory of Railway Location," affirms:—"The addition of 30 tons weight to a train of five cars will not increase the cost for coal one cent, a mile, and since all the passengers that can be squeezed into five cars will not weigh 30 tons, it follows that the variation in the haulage cost of a five-car train, carrying 300 or 400 passengers, and an empty five-car train, is but one cent, a mile."

Under existing conditions the man who holds the most land and puts it to the least use, contributes the least in taxation, and the least to the upkeep of the railways. The more the agriculturalist or the dairy farmer labors, the more he produces, the more he contributes to the railways and the Income Tax.

High railway freight, necessitated by non-paying lines in sheep-carrying country, is a land tax, imposed **not** upon the value of the land, but upon the industry of the occupier, and the wealth produced.

Wimmera—The Granary of Victoria.

MAP No. 4.—COUNTIES OF LOWAN, BORUNG and KARA KARA.

THE THIRTEEN SHIRES shown on Map No. 4 are mainly within the three Counties of Lowan, Borung, and Kara Kara. Within the county boundaries the holdings since 1881 have declined from 6,861 to 5,567. The homesteads since 1891 have decreased by 867, and in eleven of the Shires population has suffered a decline of 5,299.

The Wimmera furnishes an illustration of steadily increasing area of production side by side with a diminishing number of homesteads. Since 1881 two million acres have gone into private hands, the area under cultivation has increased by 700,000 acres, and the homesteads diminished by 1794. Farms are becoming larger but fewer. The period of greatest aggregation was between '81 and '91 when the holdings diminished by 927, while the area under cultivation increased by 477,000 acres, symbolising the rapid growth of large-scale agricultural production.

Large estates are rapidly moving northwards. One man admitted to the Railway Standing Committee that he held 10,400 acres near Jeparit (Lowan Shire), and the banks are holding 40,000 and 50,000 acre blocks, none of which appear on the Land Tax Register. Having got the land, the banks move vigorously for railway extension, and sell for £2 or £3 per acre land obtained from the State for 5/-, or they farm out the lands on the share system. "The Railway Committee," said Mr. Melville, M.L.C. (see "Hansard," 26th July, 1905) "saw plenty of wheat fields, but **they did not see any houses; the Settlers were not in evidence.**"



CHAPTER IV

The "Share" System

There is another aspect of the land question not to be lightly overlooked. When the monopolist spreads his tentacles over a country side, and voraciously absorbs every holding within his reach, he may transform it into a sheep walk or an agricultural bonanza, in either of which cases the State statistics indicate the expulsion of the Yeomanry, and the Taxation Officer colors the district land map with the symbols of the particular monopolist. But the monopolist may not do either one or the other. The solitary glories of a sheep walk may to him have no attraction, and the anxieties pertaining to the control and administration of large agricultural properties may not be a subject worthy of ambition. Perchance he prefers the profits that come without responsibility and without worry. His monopoly in conjunction with that of others has given to land an artificial value. The advance of monopoly means fewer properties for sale and advance in price accordingly. The annual rental value begins to mount towards the price at which monopoly purchased. To let under these conditions is not only to re-populate the devastated territory, and further enhance selling and rental values, but ensures a permanent income of princely proportions. So a number of men are permitted to bring ploughs and horses to cultivate the soil, sow and reap thereon, with a stipulation that a definite percentage of the product of labor must go to the Lord of the Soil. He will permit dairy farmers to inhabit his earth on like conditions and the tribute to be paid whether it be in cash or produce, will vary from the borders of Philanthropy to the limits of Rack Rent, according to the enterprising or greed of the particular monopolist.

The Transition

It is upon such conditions that the superficial observer turns his gaze and sapiently remarks that there are as many farmers upon the monopolised territory as before monopoly spread its net. There are but *under exactly different conditions*. The farmer is no longer a *procholos* tilling his own soil. He is a tributary paying tribute to men who own territories they can not of themselves utilise, and from which they derive without trick or responsibility an immensity of wealth which they know not how to consume or enjoy. It is the modernisation of the old feudal system. It is the localisation in the new world of the iniquitous land system of the old. Note then, that not only are farm holdings diminishing in number, but that there is going on a rapid transition of the agricultural producers from a freeholding Yeomanry into agricultural tributors and tenants.

The Bonanza King

Yet the man, ambitious to be the chief of an Agricultural Bonanza, and the Land Magnate, who derives his income from his agricultural tributors, may furnish some justification for their existence. The first may say:

"It is true that I have acquired a score or more of little farms and that my ploughs and harrows pass over the places where once their homes stood. It is true that upon this territory agricultural products are now raised by casually employed labor instead of as formerly by a body of resident freeholding Yeomanry. I know that this system makes home life impossible to anybody but myself; but then it is this large scale

system of farming to which the most effective and economic methods can be applied. We work with more machinery and fewer men. I know that so great has been the advance of machinery—the economy in methods and enlargement in the scale of production, that to-day in Victoria, we cultivate 1,000 acres of land, with 43 per cent. less labor than in 1881. I know that the area under cultivation has increased 132 per cent., and that the demand for agricultural labor has increased only 33 per cent. I know that if a million acres of cultivated land furnished as many farm homes and as much labor as in 1881, we should have 13,000 more homesteads and 80,000 more men employed in our fields; but then the fundamentals of capitalist production are not homesteads, but cheapness, and if homesteads stand in the way of economic production, then homesteads must disappear. Even if agricultural machinery has reduced the demand for labor, relative to the area under cultivation, that labor has found an outlet in the manufacture of agricultural appliances, and in the transport of the additional products raised by the use of such machinery."

The foregoing is the argument of the man, who to carry on large scale agriculture, mops up at every opportunity the property of his neighbors. Put in brief it means—larger farms—fewer homes—more machinery—less labor—cheaper production—more profit. Incidentally we get an insight into one of the causes of the modern phenomenon of city growths. Every advance in the use of agricultural machinery means less work in the fields, and more in the factory—less in the country and more in the manufacturing centres. This is unavoidable, but there are the other contributory causes, born of wasteful monopoly, that have no economic justification whatever.

The would-be Bonanza Kings justify their actions on economic grounds, and on the grounds of the larger responsibilities which they undertake, and the industrial functions which they perform; so also the territorial magnates who let their lands or a portion thereof on agricultural tributes, claim to be awarded the laurels of Philanthropy, because at least they permit some human beings to inhabit their dominions, at a price and without responsibility to the owner. What, however, can be said for those who pursue the policy of monopoly for no higher pur-

pose than to transform agricultural properties into sheep walks?

The Sheep Walk

The productive value of land used for sheep is insignificant, compared with land put under the plough. A sheep walk makes no call for agricultural appliances, gives no stimulus to the industrial factories or impetus to the building trades. Unlike farming, it creates no local industry outside of itself. Out of it there arises no home market for its own products, and of all industries it makes the least demand on human labor. It never decks a landscape with thriving homes—it is the negation of home and of home life for all who live or hope to live by industrious effort. Here and there the mansion of the squatter baron erects its head in grim solitude. Outside of it there is only sheep and silence. That is all—bar shearing time. Railway facilities furnished for pastoral country are a perpetual tax upon the rest of the community and where sheep take the place of men and families and habitations, the demand for labor diminishes, production falls off, populations fade away, and the revenues of the afflicted municipalities commence to rapidly decline.

Amongst the Shires that raise less revenue from rates than they did in 1881, are: Belfast, Ballan, Bungalow, Bet Bet, Mount Rouse, Ripham, Ararat, Huntly, Glenelg, Glenelg, Newham, Newstead, Springfield, Mount Franklin, Rowdale, and Metcalfe. The average fall is ten per cent. below that of 1881.

Earth Hunger

Some of these Shires are partially mining, but the majority reflect the transition from agricultural activity to pastoral lethargy. There are others—many of them—where decline is of more recent origin, and if illustration is needed, one has only to turn to the Shire of East Loddon, north of Bendigo, between the towns of Raywood and Mitiamo, on the Swan Hill line. This Shire is practically owned by less than a dozen men, of whom Atkinson, Evershank, Moniac, and Courts are the most notable. The properties of Mr. Harry Leigh Atkinson start south at Ravenwood, in Marong Shire, and his most northern acquisitions are in Molog, north of Mitiamo. Piece by piece, whenever opportunity occurs, he adds to his dominions. Mayhap, he

elements of an empire that shall rivet the long domes of the Charnels and the Russells, and stretch in an unbroken chain, through Marong and Loddon, to the waters of the Murray.

These gentlemen hungry for a planet on their own, have practically closed down on East Loddon. They own the bulk and are reaching for the rest. Whenever an agricultural property on their borders is put upon the market they pounce upon it. Agriculture cannot advance. The only move it can make is to move backward—and it does. People cannot find a living. They must look elsewhere—and they do. Nobody wants to buy their homes. The monopolist has no need of them. The only thing to do is to pull them down and sell them for firewood or cart them away. So in East Loddon to-day, there are fewer homes and the revenues of the Shire are 30 per cent., the ratepayers on roll, 35 per cent., and the population 30 per cent. less than in the year 1891. Monopoly has advanced and in proportion as it has advanced the prosperity of the Shire and its population has retreated.

Adjoining East Loddon is the Shire of EchUCA of which Hugh McKenzie, the member for the district, reported to Parliament (30th June, 1904) that:—"Twenty years ago in six parishes, immediately on the west side of EchUCA, there were 700 selectors—on the 29th March, 1902, the number of selectors in those parishes were only 127."

* * *

The Bogies

Mr. McKenzie ascribed this decline to want of water, but the same process of depopulation has gone on in all parts of the State, even where water is abundant, the soil most prolific and transit facilities of the very best. In EchUCA Shire as in East Loddon, population and habitations have diminished. In the adjoining Shires of Deakin and Waranga, a similar process has taken place, and if it be attempted to explain this by "want of water," it is only necessary to turn to the (trip)land shires of Rosedale and Traralgon, where the populations have diminished by 600, and the habitations are fewer by 120. Nor can the causes be ascribed to Labor Party, because monopoly had got its grip prior to the advent of Labor Party. Long before it came into existence the stagnation of agriculture in the other settled districts and the decline of

population therein had made their destiny plain. So much so that the then Government Statist, Mr. Haver, drew public attention to the subject (Census Report, 1891), and assigned the principle reason to "the absorption of small by large holdings, and the fact that land formerly cultivated has reverted to grazing."

In fact is to be found the reason for the decline of population in the EchUCA, Loddon, Deakin, Waranga and other Northern Shires—not want of rain or railways or Labor Party existence. That the causes are to be discovered in the iniquity of Law permitting the drift of monopoly, rather than in the vicissitudes of nature, may be proven by the fact that while during ten years (1891 to 1901) the populations of the Wimmera and of the counties of Gladstone, Cambourne and Rodney actually declined, the more arid, distant, and drought-stricken Muller increased its population by nearly 10,000.

The abolition of the sheep walk does not mean a decline in the production or exportation of wool or mutton. New Zealand has more land under the plough to-day than ever in its career, yet she carries more live stock. Her exportation of agricultural products has gone up by leaps and bounds, so also has her exportation of beef and mutton. Land under the plough not only provides more labor upon the lands, stimulates manufactures, augments the population and enlarges the home market, but enables more food to be produced, not only for human beings but for live stock of every description. Thus where ever extensive and up-to-date methods are applied to the augmentation of the agricultural resources of the soil, there arises therefrom not only additional agricultural wealth but the means whereby more sheep and cattle can be carried upon the surface than was ever possible under primitive conditions—conditions exhibited in our midst by the sheepwalk, nothing in advance of Abraham and his flocks.

The Cheviot Estate in N.Z. under Closer Settlement carries just twice the number of sheep it supported when held as a mere run, and the same applies to Wando Vale, a Closer Settlement property in Victoria. The large sheep run as a method of sheep production is obsolete and as non-economic as a wooden plough.

Counties of Talbot & Bendigo.

MAP No. 5. - 17 SHIRES.

THE MAP, when first drawn, only included Shires in which mining was being carried on, but the Shire of Loddon and the south riding of EchUCA Shire were subsequently added in order to complete County Bendigo, and show the northward extension of the Atkinson properties. It is common when dealing with mining territory to ascribe the decline of population to the decadence of the industry. But the mining centres (towns shown on map in small black squares) while they have fluctuated in population with the varying fortunes of the mining industry, have not, taken as a whole, suffered any decline as compared with 1871. yet the Shires have lost in population nearly 20,000. Between 1871 and 1881 the population of the shires in County Talbot declined by 12,000, the farm holdings diminished by 1,035 and 50,000 acres went out of cultivation.

The agricultural decadence during that period had a serious effect upon employment and population. The decline in County Bendigo did not commence until 1881, since when the holdings have diminished by 841, and in County Talbot, by an additional 696. In Marong and Huntly Shires there has been in recent years a revival of agriculture, but that cultivation is upon fewer farms. That in turn means, as elsewhere, fewer homesteads and a smaller population.



CHAPTER V.

The Sheep Tax.

There is in Victoria a so-called Land Tax. It classifies large estates as 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th class; values them as worth four, three, two, or one pound per acre; taxes them at 3d in the pound on a £4 limit, and bases the valuation upon the assumed sheep-carrying capacity of the ground. The tax was first imposed in 1871. Considering the then population, the condition of the roads, the moleared state of many of the taxed properties, and the absence of railway facilities, the valuations (however crude the method) closely approximated to the actual values of the large estates at that time.

The object of the tax was to bring about the disintegration of the large estates, but it failed—

1st. Because the tax was not graduated, and fell per acre as heavily upon the man with 5000 acres as upon the man with half a million.

2nd. Because Government after Government permitted the owners to secure reduction after reduction in the classification and taxation of their properties, so that, upon practically the same areas, they pay £121,409 per annum less in taxation than they did twenty-eight years ago. They then paid £215,770; they now pay £94,370.

3rd. Because the construction of railways through sheep country has given to the large estates not only an additional industrial value, but provides cheap trans-

port for sheep and wool. So the community these lines are a loss, but to the squatters the improved and cheapened transport means practically a refund of their taxation.

Thus the Land Tax, that was at the time of its inception a heavy penalty upon monopoly, has been rendered utterly worthless for the industrial and social ends that it was inaugurated to secure. In 1878 the large estates contributed one-eighth of the total taxation of the State—to-day only one-fortieth. If the owners had to contribute as large a proportion of the State taxes, as they did twenty-eight years ago, they would have to pay to the Victorian Treasury £443,750 per annum, or £349,380 more than they are paying at the present time.

* * * *

The Evaders.

At the inception of the Land Tax, the large estates were valued at close on fourteen and a half millions. No sooner, however, were the original classifications finished than the owners commenced to engineer to get their estates down from the higher valuation, or class, into the very lowest. In that good work of saving their pockets they have never ceased, while they have persistently agitated for the construction of non-paying lines through their properties, in order to secure cheap carriage for their wool, and added value to their properties. By 1890 they had got the valuations down to twelve millions, and at the present time

to below ten millions. Thus, upon the same area, they pay taxation upon 4½ millions less valuation per annum than they did in 1878. The pushing down of the class and valuation enables the monopolists to escape taxation in another direction. Every owner is granted "exemption" to the extent of £2500. When valued in the 1st class, an estate of 2500 acres, at £4, would be £10,000, upon £7500 of which the owner would pay tax, £93 17s. 625 acres being exempt. If the owner can get this estate assessed down to 4th class, then the whole estate is "exempt," it disappears from the register, the owner pays nothing. Every time an assessor can be persuaded to push a 40,000 acre estate from the 2nd into the 4th class, the squatter saves £1000 per annum, and the State loses it. The shed tallies at shearing time is direct evidence that the carrying capacity of the ground, in the majority of estates, is far in excess of the rates at which the estates are assessed. By the two methods described (the pushing down of the classification, and the consequent increase in the area of exemptions), the large estate owners have, since the original classification, been enabled to escape 3d. in the pound payment upon 67½ millions.

A false declaration as to income, or the undervaluation of imports are punishable offences. The under-assessment of the large estates is also a violation of the law, but nobody is responsible or punishable.

At the present time the only large estates in the 1st class are those of Wilson, of Pirron Yallock, Turnbull and Mrs Stanley, of Coleraine, and Henty, of Casterton. The estate of Percy Chirnside, at Wertheim, is in the 4th class. The Metropolitan Board of Works purchased from him 9000 acres, at £17 per acre, for sewerage purposes. It has improved the grazing quality of the land, and is now taxed as 1st class, so that the ratepayers of Melbourne are called upon to pay a tax of 1s per acre, while Chirnside, on similar land, paid only 3d. All the estates around Skipton are in the 4th class.

but Farmer John Gardiner, of Skipton, improves his land, and is, therefore, taxed on a higher scale. If classified like his wealthy neighbours, he would be outside the radius of taxation, and his name would not appear on the register. The ninety other owners whose estates appear in the first class are mostly small graziers, with a few men of the Gardiner type, or men like Foster, of Boidale, who pass the tax on to the producing tenant.

* * * *

Evasion and Effects

The reduction of classification has another result, apart altogether from the financial advantage to the monopolist—the process of aggregation is concealed. If a man owns, say, 2240 acres, classed either 1st, 2nd, or 3rd, and can get the assessor to designate it 4th class, then that estate disappears from the register, and a hundred men carry out the operation, it appears to the public gaze that large estates have been broken up to the extent of some quarter million acres. On the other hand, when a man mops up seven 320 acre sections, half a dozen homesteads and families have disappeared. There has been got together, under one ownership, 2240 acres. If the little monopoliser can show that the estates of all the great monopolisers round about are only graded 4th class, he has a legitimate claim for similar treatment, so his name and estate does not appear. If only 150 men do ditto, 1000 homesteads and families have disappeared from the soil, but the Land Register gives no indication of the expansion of monopoly. Only when the estate gets beyond 2500 acres does it become unavoidably liable to inclusion in even the lowest class of the register, and will not even then be included unless the Land Tax officer should chance to find it out for himself. Dr. Atkinson owns seven estates, each over the taxable area. How many he owns under the taxable area nobody knows but Dr. Atkinson. Sir Rupert Clarke, apart from his huge estate at Sunbury, owns many other properties over the taxable area, from Port Fairy, in the west, to as far east as the Snowy River. How many properties he

owns that are under the taxable area, and, therefore, not appearing on the register, probably even Sir Rupert himself does not know.

* * * *

Comparisons.

The existing Land Tax, regarded as a revenue raiser, is useless as a means of bringing lands into productive use. It is an absurdity, and, in its influence, is an injury, pressing most heavily upon the poorest class of graziers in the State. The largest and richest estates are surrounded and intersected by State-constructed lines. Many of them are in close proximity to large centres of population, and to the ports of shipment. Yet the properties of Sir Rupert Clarke at Sunbury, of Chinnistie at Werthebe, and of the majority of the Western district squatters, are rated 4th class, and pay 3d per acre tax, although many of them earn their rates and taxes by letting small portions of their runs at 30s and upwards per annum rental.

In the mountain country towards Koscovsko, there are little properties, such as those held by Thomas Waters and Messrs. Jenkins and Masters. Their estates are rated 3rd and 2nd class respectively. The estates of William Paton at Tallandoon (Bogong), is rated 2nd class. The estates of Thomas Seymour, of Devernax, and of John McDonald, at Gundowung, are rated 3rd class. The estate of Thomas Deane, in the mountain country east of Mansfield, is rated 3rd. All these men are far remote from railways or markets, yet they are called upon under the existing Land Tax, to pay taxation by its administration, to pay twice and three times as much per acre as the nomad holders in close proximity to Melbourne and Geelong.

Take one more illustration. The Earsay station, in the Omeo district, is mostly rated 3rd class. The property is far from a railway, and the roads are bad, and the cost of transit is very heavy, yet Earsay pays twice as much per acre as station properties near Melbourne, carrying as many, and, in some cases, more sheep per

acre. Yet the owner, Mr Hamilton, tells me that this injury and looks with dread upon the advent of a party that would remove it, maintain the Jambo Valley road as a national work, and cheapen his transport on road and rail by placing the burden on lands, in proportion as they have been enabled by the expenditure of millions of public money.

* * * *

Aggregation.

Taking the Land Tax Register as it is, it shows that 14 individuals, families, or corporations own 2,967,000 acres, and that 102 own 3,131,600 acres, so 116 own 6,098,600 acres. This is one-fourth the total alienated area of the State, and three-fourths of the area appearing upon the register. But the register does not necessarily show the total area held by these ten families and corporations.

1st. There is no compulsion upon the owners to make a sworn declaration as to the total extent of their properties.

2nd. The taxation officer must get his information from the Titles Office, and if he misses a transfer the monopolist gets the benefit.

3rd. The monopolist may own innumerable properties throughout the State, and one under the taxable area.

4th. The evidence given before the Railway Committee, referred to by Melville M.L.C. (Feb. 26, 1895), and Kelgar M.L.C. (Aug. 8, 1905), demonstrates that large areas are held by individuals and banks, without any appearance of such estates upon the register.

5th. Recent postulations by the Government have shown that several estates when wanted for closer settlement, are larger than appears from the register.

This last arises from the fact that when the monopolist buys up additional properties on his various boundaries, the taxation officer must treat them as separate properties. He cannot add to the original assessment, and unless the newly-acquired properties are of themselves within a taxable class and area, the officer can take no cognizance of these additions to the nomad holdings.

The reduction of class-rates has, therefore, not only deprived the State of a round million in revenue, but it has excluded millions of acres from the register. The number of persons whose names appear upon the register is 872, of whom 308 own only an average of 1200 acres, in blocks between 0.40 and 2000 acres. The Government Statist, in his last report shows that 1407 persons hold 1,457,000 acres of alienated and leasehold land. The Land Tax Register shows that 116 own at least 2,967,000 acres of actually alienated territory. Taking all the enumerated facts into consideration, it is well within the limit to affirm that **550 individuals, families, or corporations own one-half of the alienated lands of Victoria.**

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Two Shires.

The two shires of Mortlake and Hampden are typical of the Western district. Together they make up the County of Hampden. Their total area is 1845 square miles, or 1,180,000 acres, of which 20 families own 800,000 acres, nearly three-fourths.

The total population, men, women and children—is 10,030, of whom 4160 reside in the three towns of Terang, Campedown and Mortlake. In these towns there are 832 dwellings. In the vicinity of these towns, where a few of the squatters have sublet a portion of their estates for dairying purposes, there are 789 dwellings. Over three-fourths of the area there is only one human habitation—house, farm, or hominy for every seven square miles of country. The number of persons who keep dairy cows are 463, the number of cows 26,233. Allowing three acres to a cow, the area so used is 78,699 acres. In these two shires the area used for fruit-growing or for the raising of root and grain crops is only 773 acres, so that over an area of nearly a million and a quarter acres only 67 per cent. of the land is used for dairying and agricultural purposes. Over the remainder 1,101,325 acres, the squatters run their flocks, and furnish an isolated existence for a few

hundred persons. I feel only in the partial manner that it is used around Campedown and Terang, this larger area would furnish a livelihood for over 100,000 additional citizens upon the soil. It would give an impetus to the building trade, to the manufactures of the city, and augment the revenues of the State, not by additional taxation, but by the increased number of contributors.

These two shires, where the territory within their borders, with all improvements thereon—Terang, Campedown and Mortlake included, as worth £3,587,100, an average value, land and improvements, of £14s per acre. The revenue from rates is £75,314, of which the bulk is provided by the towns mentioned, and by dairy farming tenants in proximity to those towns. These rates are not sufficient for local roads and bridges work, so the shires draw from the State the sum of £2000. The squatter families have closed in, and use for sheep grazing in these two shires 16,357 acres of Crown lands (closed roads). The rates which they pay for local government purposes would not be a decent rental upon the State properties, which they have been allowed to occupy and use for years without a penny payment.

The majority of the large estates are graded fourth-class for sheep tax purposes, and are rated at about 3s per acre annual value for local Government purposes. The owner of a 50,000 acre estate is thus called upon to pay, less exemption, £503 per annum to the State, and £375 to the municipality, or £968 in all. If he lets out 1000 acres for dairying or agricultural purposes, at 30s per acre, he is in receipt of £1700, the tenants pay the rates and taxes upon the entire estate. The municipality may raise the valuation of the lot portion, and the State may place that portion third or second-class in the Sheep Tax Register; but the fact remains that it is only necessary to tenant a small portion of the estate in order to earn enough to free the entire property from all liability, either to State or municipality.

Under Closed Roads, Act they now pay rent.

Farmer v. Squatter.

Wedge in amongst the large estates there is here and there a freshhold farm—a speck on the horizon—an oasis in the midst of comparative desolation. The immensity of wealth capable of being produced from even the inferior soils of the Western District is demonstrated by the operations of Mr. John Gardiner on his farm at Skipton. A writer in the "Agricultural Gazette" (March, 1905), avers that Mr. Gardiner's land is no different from the surrounding estates, that the grazing average under the obsolete methods of sheep culture maintained by the squattocracy is only one sheep to the acre; and that, from an agricultural point of view, the land is by no means promising. Yet from this land Mr. Gardiner, pursuing up-to-date farming methods, gets a wheat average of 24 bushels per acre; of oats 40 bushels, and upon his rape fallows runs for five months out of the 12 an average of 18 sheep to the acre. A portion of the land is under green peas for pig feeding purposes; and, besides the sheep and pigs, the land carries, 50 head of cattle and 40 horses for farm work. A large proportion of this farm is still under natural grass, but the writer in the "Agricultural Gazette" declares that the railway way bills show that in proportion to area Mr. Gardiner furnishes ten times as much freight to the railways as any of the surrounding estates.

Industry Taxed.

If the 4,000 square miles of country shown on No. 1 map were operated on similar principles, it would mean an addition of 14 million tons of freight to our railways, and an addition of at least half a million to the railway revenue. The additional employment and population arising from land so utilised would mean an immense augmentation of national wealth—an assurance of an immense annual surplus, and the inevitable result of such surplus would mean facilities for further expansion, for a reduction of taxation, and remission of

railway charges. If Mr. Gardiner gives ten times as much freight to the railways as his neighbours, so also does he furnish additional work to shearers and ploughmen, to the loaders of wheat, and wool, and mutton, to wagon builders, harness makers, makers of agricultural implements, and artificial manure workers. Directly and indirectly, farms operated on principles similar to those followed by Mr. Gardiner, call into existence fifty times as much wealth as land devoted exclusively to sheep grazing on virgin pastures. Yet Mr. Gardiner is taxed, not upon his land, but upon his industry. Round about him are the estates of Bridges, Austin, Chirnside, and Russell. Their land for sheep tax purposes is placed in the lowest class. Mr. Gardiner's land in its virgin state is no better. Classified like the surrounding estates, he would escape the operations of the sheep tax, but because by the application of scientific methods he has given to his land a higher sheep-carrying capacity, he is called upon to pay a higher tax. If the adjoining estates were placed in the same class as Mr. Gardiner's, farm, Messrs. Bridges, Austin, Chirnside, and Russell would have to contribute an additional sum of £2671 to the revenues of the State. The sheep tax by farmers like Mr. John Gardiner therefore distinctly a tax upon industry, and a premium towards the maintenance of land monopoly. Secondly, every increase in the productivity of an acre means an increase of Income Tax. Thirdly, reduction of railway freights can only follow an increase of goods carried, so that the cost of railway maintenance can be distributed over the larger number of products, therefore any law that bases taxation upon the value of land instead of its product must be a law favourable to the interests of producers. Nothing could be more interesting than to be able to compare the freight charges, the income and sheep taxes paid by Mr. Gardiner and one of the neighbouring squatters in order to

see how much each paid per acre of land held. A graduated land value tax would mean to men like Mr. Gardiner a financial gain, while to the neighbouring squatters it would mean that they would have to put their land to a higher productive use or else subdivide and give somebody else a chance to live.

Resumption and Railways.

That Mr. Gardiner has not got hold of an isolated patch of rich land is proven, not only by the evidence of agricultural experts, but by the fact that further west Mr. Arthur Murphy, pursuing similar methods, has achieved equally good results, but neither of them can get railway facilities, because farms are so few, and the large settlers so dominant. The proposed railway from Linton, through Skipton, Stratham, to Lake Bolac, a distance of 40 miles, would pass through three estates and would, as in the case of the Dunkeld-Penshurst line, be regarded by the squatters as a convenience for the transport of their sheep. The result in one case, as in the other, would be a dead loss to the community. The resumption of large estates prior to the extension of railways into such territories is the only guarantee of sound settlement and profitable railway business. If the district around Skipton possesses such possibilities in wealth production, what are the possibilities of the other portions of that vast territory dealt with on the No. 1 map. An agricultural labourer who has resided in the Western District for 30 years says:—

"The once-Luxuriant Garden."

"Leithridge is situated twenty miles from the port of Geelong. To the east of Leithridge, about one mile distant, is the well-known Moorabool River, the valley of which, for richness of soil, has no superior in the Southern Hemisphere. Here some thirty years ago was the scene of busy life. Vineyards and orchards were plant-

ed, giving promise of the establishment of industries which are as yet only in their infancy. Owing to the almost unlimited area of land available, the settlers discovered that there was an easier and less tiring means of livelihood, that of grazing. The vineyards and orchards were allowed to grow wild, becoming even a nuisance by breeding codlin moth, which is so destructive to Victorian orchards in other parts. Thus through the curse of large areas, cattle are grazing through the ruins of the once luxuriant gardens. Two miles further up the river is the Muringhuk estate, owned by an absentee landlord. Here we find a still worse state of things prevail. The same rich soil overrun with thistles to such an extent that even the squatter's sheep cannot penetrate them. It was with respect to this estate that the manager petitioned successfully against the hire valuation, with the result that the annual rental value is set down at 3s per acre, although portion of this land is let to neighbouring farmers at 30s per acre, and hundreds of acres more, if made available, would be quickly taken at the same price by men who are leaving the State to secure land in New Zealand or West Australia. Cross to the western side of the Geelong and Ballarat line. Three-quarters of a mile takes you to the boundary wall of Golf Hill estate, owned by another absentee landlord. This estate includes some of the richest soil in the State, yielding one time twelve and thirteen tons of onions to the acre."

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High unto Geelong.

Similar testimony is obtainable in abundance. Lying directly north from Geelong to Ingleton, on the Melbourne-Ballarat line, with the Geelong-Ballarat line for a western boundary, and the Balliang Creek to the east, there are hundreds of thousand acres of good volcanic soil within an hour of a shipping port, nearly the whole devoted to sheep, and of which Chirnside, Austin, Armitage, Russell, and twelve others own 393,000 acres.

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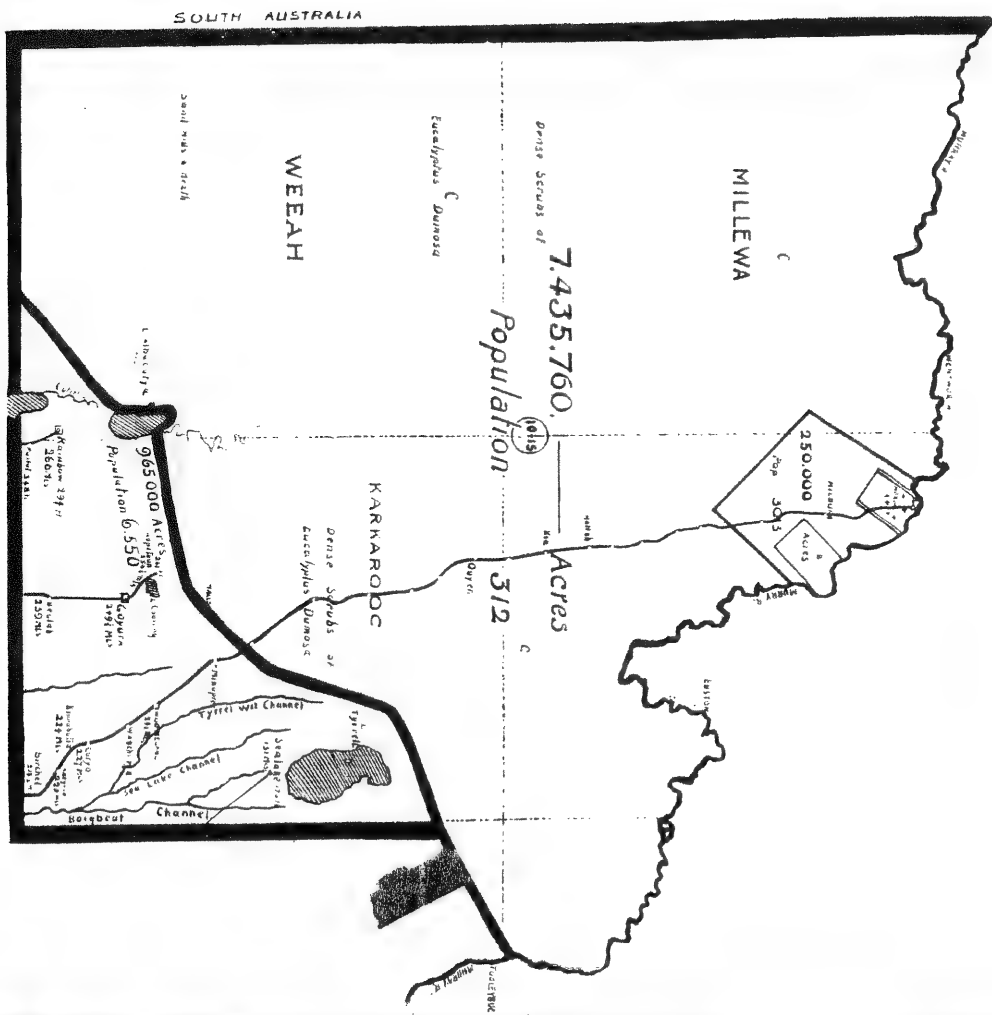
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COUNTIES MILLEWA, WEAH AND KARKAROO.



NORTH-WEST VICTORIA.

COUNTRIES of MILLEWA, WEEAH and KARKAROOO

Area occupied by actual owners	Acres
Area occupied by private tenants	28,000
Area alienated	550,000
Land in process of alienation	665,000
Remaining Crown areas	7,436,000
Total area	8,651,000
Total population	8,875
Farms under 200 acres	430
Farms between 200 and 1000 acres	734
Farms over 1000 acres	287
Total farms	1,451
Acres cultivated	422,783

On the question of Mallee Water Supply the Railway Committee reported as follows :—

“The Committee considers that no Mallee areas should be made available for occupation by settlers until some definite scheme for a supply of water for domestic and stock purposes has been approved. The cost of bringing water on to the area should be made a charge on the land, which should not be classified until the water has been taken on to it, as the presence of a supply for domestic and stock purposes enhances the value of the land. In recent years the practice has been first to classify the land, putting it into a low class because of the absence of water or railways, and shortly afterwards, when a contract has been made with the settlers that they are to get the trethold of their holdings at the reduced classification, steps are taken to provide a supply of water, and also facilities for getting the produce of the settlers to market. **To continue that policy in the future would be unjust to the State.**”

But as will be seen by the Map and the Statistics attached thereto, cultivation, even on the newest territory, is carried on in a very insignificant percentage of cases by *bona fide* owners, the land having already fallen into the hands of financial corporations, renting out the holdings to the actual cultivators of the soil.

The Victorian "Switzerland."

SEE MAP No. 7.

CHAPTER VI.

Without Roads or Rails

It is upon the immense territory of eastern and northern Gipsyland, at present without rails or decent roads, and with nine-tenths of its area still in possession of the Crown, that Victoria may pursue a policy that will demonstrate what an effective industrial and social purpose is capable of accomplishing. Within this area is the mountain range known as the Australian Alps, and, these ranges, with their spurs and foothills and sheltered valleys, wherein tree vegetation attains its greatest height and growth, are the true forest region of the State. **This territory is larger than Switzerland.** Its forests of timber, that to-day for a few paltry pounds of rent are burned to make room for a few cattle, far exceed in extent and value those of the Swiss Republic. Its hardly-touched stores of mineral wealth of every description, bar coal, is something that Switzerland does not possess. Its huge deposits of sculp-tory and decorative marbles are unsurpassed in all the world; but, owing to present inaccessibility, transport from Italy, 14,000 miles away, is cheaper than 250 miles from the Limestone Crank. Its vast stores of building stone at Mount Lookout, and elsewhere, occupy a similar position. Its remarkable series of caves and caverns, now left to the attack of every passing vandal, if cured for, and

roads made passable, would be as great an attraction to the tourist as those of Jemolan. For a portion of the year the higher table lands and ranges of this region are under snow, but not more so than all Canada and the northern countries of Europe. There are not, as in the Swiss Republic, large areas under perpetual snow, nor sliding glaciers, nor devastating avalanches of ice and rock to carry destruction to property, annihilation to industry, and death to communities. Switzerland has 3940 square miles covered by rocks, mountains, and glaciers, and a large area below it, constantly menaced; while 530 miles of its lower levels are covered by lakes, so that in the areas available for settlement "Indeed," says Winchester in his "Swiss Republic," "the greater part of its life consists of nothing but a film of soil, superimposed on fragments of rock." Yet Switzerland, upon this smaller area of usable land carries a population of 34 millions; while on this larger area in Victoria we have but 32,000 inhabitants, maintained principally by mining. So much is this so that (excepting the agricultural settlements on the lower reaches of the Snowy and Tambo rivers, and the population at the Lakes Entrance), if it were not for mining the territory would be as deserted and as silent as the regions of the Arctic.

Grazing and Agriculture

A large portion of the land of Switzerland is still held in common, or, as we would say, Crown lands. Two million acres consist of forest, 1,936,000 acres common pasturage, and other millions and valley sites are rented, principally to those engaged in forestry for garden, orchard, and vineyard purposes. In addition, there are 1,730,000 acres under sown grass, and 1,533,093 under the plough. Upon this territory there are 300,000 landed proprietors, and from the product of farm, and forest, and garden, and orchard, added to cattle breeding, and dairying, and manufacture of cheese and butter, there is direct sustenance from the soil for one half of the total population of the Republic. Every inch of available land is utilised. Crop and stock culture is combined, so that, with 14 million more acres under the plough, it carries seven times more cattle, 15 times more pigs, five times as many horses, as many sheep, as does the Alpine area of Victoria. It again demonstrates that the highest stock-carrying power is found combined with the highest agricultural development. Against the large forestry revenue of Switzerland our area produces practically nothing, and, while on our area there is only 863 beehives, those of Switzerland number 353,000 (eight times all Victoria), giving to the little Republic a large traffic in beeswax and honey. The Republic produced over £100,000 worth of tobacco, and from an area smaller, more mountainous, and not more fertile, it raised a value in stocks, crops, and dairy produce reaching into millions. It is not so much territory that we need, as a public policy directed to its utilisation.

But if it be said that results in Switzerland are the outcome of centuries of effort, it is only necessary to direct attention to Japan, where a definite industrial and social policy has resulted in a comparatively few years all that took

European countries hundreds of years to accomplish. In every direction communities apply with rapidity that which others only acquired by tedious experiment and laborious effort.

It is not sterility, but inaccessibility, that bars the settlement of our eastern estate. With the exception of the Three Plains, the bulk of alienation, so far, has been upon the fringes of the territory upon the lower river flats in closest proximity to the markets. Yet the alienation to date only reaches one million acres, and with every increase of accessibility other rich lands will come to have a productive value. That these areas can be largely added to is certain, while behind agriculture are the possibilities of dairying, cattle-breeding, forestry, and mineral production.

Fertilisation and Production

If it were true that the remaining Crown lands are so sterile as to be unfit for agricultural production, then the alienation of such land is a robbery perpetrated by the State on those induced to select. The establishment of agricultural properties is the fundamental reason upon which selection is based. Individuals are still selecting. If their object is monopoly or speculative traffic, then alienation is a crime against the public welfare. If it is taken up for an industrial purpose, for which the soil is not fitted, then the authorities trade upon the ignorance of the citizen, condemn him to hopeless drudgery, and defraud him of his means.

But soil sterility, while it spells ruin to men without means, and to men of means tied to obsolete methods, dwindle before appropriate fertilisation, the rotary system of production, and united stock and crop culture, instead of exhausting specialisation. The old passion of the "inherent and indestructible properties of the soil"—that richness or poorness is unchangeable—is something that nobody really believes to-day. Yet inherited ideas are such a curious thing, so difficult to grapple and to cast aside.

that, in face of the world's evidence, and often in opposition to their own experience, men talk unconsciously, as if rich soil must be ever rich, and poor soil eternally poor.

In the *Agricultural Journal* (March, 1906) it is pointed out how land in the vicinity of Koroff twenty years ago became exhausted and "hungry," producing little; how present fertility is the product of human effort, and how the ruling price (£50 to £70 per acre) is not a price paid for the original inherent producing qualities of the soil, but is a price paid for a productive capacity given by man. "That soil we did again become as 'hungry' as the poorest virgin soil if the tiller became careless of its maintenance. All the old countries of the world furnish thousands of similar lessons, and England is producing an average of thirty bushels per acre from the soil that in the early part of last century was only producing an average of nine bushels, while in some of cases in Victoria farmers have doubled and tripled the producing quality of the ground."

* * *

Redeeming the Desert

Of virgin lands once regarded as "barren," and uninhabitable, but now the centres of industrial activity, almost every country furnishes an illustration. The "Great Central Desert" of the U.S., the dread of the early overlanders, is a case in point. The cultivation of the one time dreary "sand dunes" of Holland is another. The mallee in Victoria was at one time regarded as an unquenchable Sahara, and 7500 square miles in Millewa and Weeah is yet without a settlement, but no one doubts that they in their turn will be brought within the arena of active production. The "Little Desert" in County Louth, for many

years regarded as sterility itself, is now a wheat-producing area. The effect of phosphate fertilisers upon the Mallee and Meroona lands has transformed those areas into hives of agricultural activity. The operations of the Gardiner Bros. at Buangali have established an oasis in a comparative desert, demonstrating what is capable of accomplishment upon millions of acres now regarded as only fit to carry something less than a sheep to the acre. Operations by a private individual at Bondigo upon an arid country that previously couldn't grow a blade of grass, has resulted in the production of crops sufficient for the maintenance of a dairy cow per acre, while the experiments of the Agricultural Department on the "hungry" areas of Heytesbury furnish proof of their producing power, and of their utility for settlement. In short, there is no indestructible richness or poverty. The richest lands become "hungry" and sterile, and stand in the same category as the poorest of virgin soil—they are both non-productive. To make them productive, similar methods and efforts are necessary, and henceforth their producing power is as much the result of human labour as a steamboat or plough.

To speak then of the millions of acres in Tambo, Croajingolong, and other eastern counties as non-productive, and valueless for settlement is absurd and reactionary, and a shutting of the eyes to the triumphs of Science, and Skill over all deficiencies. The fertilisation of the soil, the increase of the area of productivity, the extension of settlement, march side by side with the advance of agricultural science, and the determination of communities to apply it.



A Piece of Old Gippsland

MAP No. 6.

THE Gippsland Shires of Rosedale, Maffra, Traralgon and Avon are better served with rivers than any other part of the State. They are splendidly served with railways, and have the advantage of cheap water carriage, good land and a fine rainfall. In Maffra Shire some of the estates have been partially let for dairying and agriculture. This has served to maintain the population, but the tenants have not a pennyworth of proprietary interest in the soil they cultivate. In Traralgon and Rosedale Shires the population has fallen off by 600, and the inhabited dwellings by 120. In Avon Shire there are 1000 fewer people, and 143 fewer homesteads than there were in 1871.

Foster's Estate at Boisdale is let out on tribute on the one-half share system. Each block is about 100 acres, and Mr. Foster erects all necessary buildings and silos, and provides cattle, ploughs, milk-cans and other requisites. He takes one-half the gross returns. He runs a cheese and butter factory, and after deducting the cost of working deducts one-half the balance. All weaned calves are claimed by the landlord, and if the tenant makes money from pigs or other sources, one-half must go to Mr. Foster. The tenant has no chance of ever securing the freehold, although the anti-Labour argument is that personal ownership is the sole incentive of industry. Mr. Foster has about £1000 of capital on each block, and gets from £250 to £475 per annum in return, or £2 10s. to £4 15s. per acre. What Mr. Foster is doing the organised people of Victoria can also do under terms far more advantageous to the actual producer.



CHAPTER VII.

Grazing v. Forestry

It has been pointed out that in the non-railway territory of Eastern Victoria there is yet a large area of rich, unalienated land, at present barred to settlement by inaccessibility, and as for millions of other acres classed "inferior," a special correspondent of the "Argus" (31.3.06) covered the position when he said—

"Popular fallacies in respect to the poor quality of certain lands have time after time been upset by the ripper knowledge of how to deal with them."

The same writer, speaking of the country between Bendoc and the Snowy refers to

"Splendid timber, but rather poor land. Here and there in the gullies and flats settlers have made their homes. Excellent samples of maize, potatoes, rye-grass, clovers, and fruits were shown. The country is rugged and broken. The country is the ridge land to profitable account is the pressing problem. At present the settlers hold a large tract in its natural state for grazing, but the natural herbage is too scanty and too uninviting to permit either of breeding or fattening being carried on profitably."

The Crown lands in Victoria occupied for pastoral purposes number 13,000,000 acres. The minimum rental is 1½d. per acre, but the net return to the Lands department is only ½ of a penny per acre. It is thus evident that either the return is not correct, or more than one half the rentals are not paid. The "pastoral leases" (as distinct from grazing and malice leases) are charged, on grazing capacity, 1s. per head for sheep, and 5s. per head for cattle. The cash rental to the State works out at 3d. per acre, so, on this calculation, it takes 124 acres for every head of cattle carried. Rugged South Gippsland carries 100 head per 1000 acres—(Craigholm, only 11. If these lands have no value for agricultural purposes, they certainly, in their natural state, have very little for grazing. The "Argus" writer, previously quoted, pointed out how scattered selectors and large tracts on lease for grazing, that the natural herbage is too scanty to permit of breeding or fattening being carried on profitably, and Mr. Pinnager, an officer of the Lands department, recently reported in the following words—

"It is the invariable practice among these run holders to burn their country every year, or second year. If they do not, the herbage becomes too rank, and the run becomes useless as

a pasturage. These lands cannot be used with profit, without sacrificing the forest. Both interests cannot be conserved in the one place, for the prosperity of the one involves the ruin of the other."

Further on, Mr. Pinnager gives a telling illustration by quoting the case of the Colquhoun forest reserve. No young trees had been permitted to grow. Cattle have devoured seedlings and tender growths, so that there has been no replacement of the cut timber. For many years forest reproduction has been sacrificed for grazing rentals. Yet, says Mr. Pinnager, "the total rents for grazing rights in this forest did not exceed £10 per annum, nor the total stock depastured upon it number more than 100."

* * *

Forests should be Revenue-Producing

Thus it is, that we derive from the Crown lands of Victoria a grazing rental valueless to the State, because it is either absorbed by administration, or counterbalanced by the destruction of present forest revenue, and future forest wealth. In most European countries, forests are a source of large profit to the controlling State. Their net earnings vary from 5s. to £1 per acre. Prussian forests last year gave a net profit close on 1½ millions; Saxony, from 116,000 acres of forest, derives a profit of over £300,000 per annum. Switzerland raises timber of every description, "and," says "Winchester,"

"It is under the supervision of trained foresters and wood rangers, that on a mountain side, apparently nothing but a forbidding rock, are found oak, birch, and pine trees, in large quantities and good dimensions. Care and attention enables a tree to grow its normal size on what is apparently little more than towering and weird piles of sheer rocks."

Switzerland has had to make a large outlay in re-afforestation as a penalty for previous denudation, but, so far as East-

tern Victoria is concerned, there is no call for any such large initial outlay. All that is needful is preservation. An area of trees is not made a forest by simply marking it off against trespass. It can only be made a forest in reality by eliminating the weak and useless, so giving room for the growth and expansion of the best species. Again, many trees, such as blackwood, grow in small clumps, and should be protected, just as much as if they grew in extensive areas. There is protection for specified forms of bird and animal life, and similar protection should be given to specified timber growths upon Crown lands, irrespective of whether they grew in isolation, in small groups, or immense forests. True settlement does not consist in advancing areas containing trees worth £30 to £100 per acre; nor true forestry in marking off as "forest reserve" an area containing no trees. Yet the old factions, who pride themselves upon their business capacity and their commercial instincts, have done both.

The Possibilities

Baron Von Mueller, in his little booklet on "Forestry Culture in its Relation to Industrial Pursuits," says—

"For forest operations we enjoy here advantages of twofold kind, for which in Middle Europe we are justly envied. We can disseminate quickly-growing eucalyptus trees in the most arid districts; we can add to them, as a first shelter, many of the native casuarinas and acacias, and thus gain cover for less hardy trees of other countries. On the other hand, we find in the moist and rich valleys of our ranges a vast extent of space, where, under the mild influence of the climate, sub-tropic trees could be reared millions-fold; where, for instance, whole forests of the red cedar might be originated. Besides, we do not stand at any disadvantage if we want to raise a belt of sea-coast pines all along the shores, or if we wish to rear the Norway spruce, or silver fir, or larch, or Weymouth fir, or the Dougl-

has pine or any of the pitch pines of North America; because we can call forth, if we like, whole forests of them on subalpine heights never yet utilized.

"The quick-growing eucalypts, among which the blue-gum tree of this colony and Tasmanian stands pre-eminent, are comparatively few in number, not are those few all of gigantic size. They are, moreover, restricted in their natural occurrence to limited tracts of country, from which they must be established by the hand of man in other soils for the necessities of other communities—for the gratification of other populations. The pines of foreign lands must be brought to our shores—to our Alps—with an intention of utilizing every square mile of ground, however unpropitious in its sterility; for, after all, that square mile represents a portion, albeit so small, of the land surface of the globe. The Norway spruce, which gives us so much of our deal and tar, illustrates its massive roots and the fissures of disintegrating rocks, or, failing to penetrate the stony structure, sends its trailing roots over the surface and down the sides of the barest rocks, until they have found a genial soil, however scanty, on the edge of a precipice. Nature ever active and laborious, ever wise and beneficent—allows the tree thus to live, thus to convert the solid boulders finally into soil, and all the time adds unceasingly to the treasures of the domain of man."

"The by-products and subsidiary industries of forestry are numerous and varied. There is the collection of seeds and flowers for export, the production of potash, volatile oils, charcoal, and tar, acetic acid, and wood spirits for lighting, heating, and drying purposes. All the work can go side by side with forest thinning operations. Potash is largely in demand for nitre, for glass production, and for the manufacture of various soaps and dyes. For potash

production, chips, bark, branches, leaves—the waste of forestry are thrown into a pit and burnt the ashes placed in tubs cold water poured thereon, and liquid potash results. After evaporation the dry ciner potash remains. Every 25th, of wood ash, according to Von Mueller, produces 2½ lbs. of potash. Wood spirits, for which there would be a ready market in Victoria for motor purposes, is produced by a process of dry distillation. The methods necessary for the conduct of these subsidiary industries are very simple and easily taught. In the

"August, of January 12, 1906, a courteous, writing upon this subject, said: "A properly worked forest can give a lot of employment. In European forests, taking an average all round, it is calculated the forests give FIVE DASH' MOUTH PIER ANNUM PER ACRE, and there are thousands of acres never touched by a man, and this does not include the working up of the forest produce. Germany, a country of 208,127 square miles, spends £9,000,000 on forest labour per annum, and makes a profit on its operations. Victoria has 7,781 square miles, and a far greater amount of forest than Germany, and does not, so far, spend £50,000, or even what it spends, but the possibilities are there." If the forests of Victoria were so organized that an acre of forest should furnish only one day's work a year, the 12,000,000 of wood land in this State would furnish work all the year round for 10,000 men, and our Alpine territory, instead of being a liability, would be providing a living for thousands of families. Organized on the basis declared by Mr. Trarham to be of Victoria would furnish employment for 300,000 men. Forestry is practically an untouched industry in Victoria, the bulk of the forest revenue derived by the State being obtained from an area of not more than 100,000 acres. The destruction of forestry as a precedent to settlement is the old policy, and wherever carried out has meant

the complete extermination of a valuable industry. The development of forestry as an industry, co-existent with agriculture, means the maintenance of a larger variety of occupations, additional resources, and a valuable fall back in periods of agricultural depression.

"We have a Lands department operating on the assumption that soil fertility is a fixture, potential wealth a dream, and agricultural science a chimera. Present-day revenue is everything, and the public estate, regarded as worthless, is disposed of as 'inferior cattle' country; prices next to nothing—repayments over 40 years, and an army of officers for the collection. There is little actual settlement, but there is alienation, and the inevitable aftermath—aggregation.

But if there were no aggregation, the cutting up of Eastern Victoria in the large sections permitted under 1th class valuation would mean, in its culmination, a sparse population, sitting out in precarious existence on 'inferior cattle' country. It would mean a destroyed forestry; a railway system entailing an immense loss upon the State, and a costly system of road structure, imposing a ruinous burden upon the municipalities, because the low valuation of such country would not be equal to the maintenance cost of essential roads. This is what we get, and all we can hope or expect from the present method of dealing with the millions of acres of Crown property in the Eastern division of this State.

No "Desert" Country

Pessimists say that this undisposed of land cannot be utilized. The same thing was said fifty years ago, but districts then marked "desert" are now sustaining hundreds of thriving farms. We have abundant evidence within and without the State that soil fertility provides as agricultural chemistry advances. Not only that, but we have a Department of Agriculture that, in every part

of the State, and in its every experiment, declares that the assumption upon which the Lands Department disposes of the public estate, is false and erroneous. The more the soil is cultivated, the greater is the quantity of food raised and the larger the stock carried. The stock return fertilizers to the soil, and the soil yields in yet greater abundance. Agriculture and stock raising are not antagonistic—their combination is essential for the triumph of economical primary production. Upon the basis of those facts, the most successful farming in Victoria and elsewhere is operated. Even in Eastern Gippsland, some of the richest crops are grown on lands originally disposed of as 'inferior cattle' country.

Socialised Settlement

Therein is the keynote of the situation, and the justification for new methods. The State will utilize its scientific and financial resources so that its territory be settled, not in the old promiscuous way, but in a manner conducive to the industrial expansion of the districts, the wellbeing of the settlers, and the stability of the State. The land settlement policy of Victoria tends down to a question as to whether a man shall be left to struggle by himself or whether he shall work, well prepared with the utmost assistance that the organized community, with accumulated knowledge and financial power, can render him. There is not, and never has been, any doubt upon which side of the question stood the Labour Party of this State.

Special Legislation Needed

Eastern Victoria should be dealt with by special legislation and new methods, and the first act should be the nationalisation of many of its main roads. This should be so for two reasons. The first is that these roads, for the most part, run through, or shut on Crown lands. The second is, that as the State gives other districts a railway, these districts are at

least entitled to a road. The mallee is comparatively level; it is most effectively and economically served by railways—and gets them. Eastern Victoria is mountainous. It would be best served by roads, and ought to get them. The local municipalities cannot do the making, the territory is so large, the settlements so scattered, the revenues insignificant. The roads in Eastern Victoria are as much a State function as railways in other parts. Good roads are a factor in closer settlement. The only inducements offered by bad roads is to sell out and get nearer civilisation. Good roads shorten distances. They mean larger loads, lighter waggons, less haulage, less waste, better returns. It is not how far to market, but how long to get there. In Eastern Victoria, the first special act, is the nationalisation of specified roads.

* * * *

Closer Settlement Policy

But the State maintenance of these roads is not everything. Considered by itself, it would present but the spectacle of a costly enterprise, giving insignificant results. It must rest upon something stronger than mere assumption of settlement, or upon the system that permits aggregation in proximity to lines and roads. Side by side with a road policy must be a clear, defined and well comprehended system of closer settlement, applied to the lands in proximity to the new-made arteries of traffic. For the purchase of the Werribee Estate alone, the State paid £354,000. On the State-owned grass tree country in Heyesbury, the Agricultural department proposes to utilise stream ploughs, and make the land available for direct cultivation. A similar policy of experiment upon selected areas in Eastern Victoria should be vigorously pursued, and upon lands costing the State nothing, a policy of improvement inaugurated. Such lands should then be dealt with under the provisions of the Closer Settlement Act.

as if they were acquired private estates. Upon each of such estates the Agricultural Department should hold and conduct an experimental farm, exhibiting the most up-to-date methods, and thus distributing the advantages of agricultural technical education over the widest possible area in the most economical manner. The speculators, going for the rise in values given by the construction of lines and roads, should be rigorously barred, and the alienation of surrounding lands in the large sections permitted under the 3rd and 4th class classifications of the Land Act should give place to the operations of the Closer Settlement Act—and its extension. Thus, upon the roads we should have definite settlements, and the settlers a guarantee of an outlet for their produce. Mr. Finlanger, in his report, suggests that 200,000 acres in Croaringalong might be thrown open for settlement. Such areas should be reported on by the experts of the Agricultural Department; roads constructed, farms made available for operations. Public money in other parts of the State spent on purchase of private estates can in these parts be expended on improvements of the public estate. If the lands proposed by Mr. Finlanger are not worth this expenditure, they are not worth settlement. Nay, without roads settlement is not possible—the only possibility is alienation.

Four Great Divisions

To sum up, Victoria consists of four great divisions. 1st, the old settled districts splendidly served by roads, rails, and proximity to water carriage. These areas have drifted into comparatively few hands, and upon them fewer farms and farmers than 30 years back. Monopoly has absorbed the largest and best portions, transformed them into sheep walks, made the railways in their vicinity a tax on the whole community, pushed population into the back country, necessitated new roads, rails, schools, etc., to meet the requirements of the pushed-back population, and gener-

ally increased the cost of State and municipal government. Therefore is required taxation based upon land values, because such mode of basing contributions to the general "exchequer" is not a tax upon industry, but upon monopoly. It brings to an end the monopolist power of exclusion, and opens the door of opportunity to other men. It replaces the sheepwalk with homesteads, it calls for the work of the artisan to develop a home market. It stimulates not the exodus, but the advent of people. With more people the tax per head is less, while the general revenue is more. It penalises idleness, and stimulates production. Multiplied production increases railway freight, piles up the iron road revenues, and, as the railways are for the public service, and not private property, railway charges may be diminished as the volume of traffic rises. Facilities may thus be extended without extended loans. Such are some of the inevitable consequences of a contributory system, that calls upon a man to pay for the upkeep of his country in proportion as he owns it.

Mountain and Mallee

Further, without such method of taxation, the system of land repurchase and closer settlement must come to an abrupt ending, because every purchase and settlement, increasing the value of adjoining estates, makes it more expensive for the government to extend its operations. This unavoidable process must speedily make purchase so costly that purchase must cease or become unprofitable. The tax on land values would give the State the values it had created by its closer settlement policy, and give it the means of indefinitely extending that policy without borrowing.

Again, estates for closer settlement are being purchased haphazard all over the country, and the operations of the Board are being made as extensive as the State itself. The varied character of the land

and situation adds to the complexity of the work, and piles up the cost. There is no definite policy of resumption for the development of any given territory, nor consideration of the bearing of such resumption upon railway extension and port development. There is to be large expenditure upon the extension of the port of Geelong, the products are to come over hundreds of miles of sheep-ridden territory from the Wimmera and Mallee, but there is no proposition for the resumption of the monopolised territory at the very door of Geelong. There are agitators for the extension of rails from Linton to Lake Bolac, and from a point on the Lintons line south to Boscawen. Either extension would traverse but three or four large estates. Under existing conditions the lines would be as serious a loss to the State as the line constructed from Dunkeld to Penhurst. But if a wide area of land on each side of the proposed lines were reserved prior to construction, it would be the cheapest resumption that had taken place, because enhanced value would be given by the new rails extension; and that value would go to the State as a repayment, whereas in any estate so far purchased the State has had to pay the private owner the value given to the land by lines already constructed. This policy would enable the State to guarantee settlement in proximity to the new lines, and give assurance to the general community that such lines would be profitable. It would also enable the Railway Commissioners to fix lower through freights upon timber from the Otway Forest, and thus materially help the mining industry of Ballarat. Following this should come the resumption and extension westward of the lines from Leigh Road or Winchelsea towards Lismore. Thus this vast territory, the natural feeding ground of the port of Geelong, would be brought, by a definite but gradually adopted policy, within the sphere of industrial activity. Whatever argument applies in justification of borrowing for railway extension, applies with tenfold force to borrowed money expend-

of an assumption for best settlement on lands in proximity to lines about to be constructed.

* * *

The second division is that portion of Eastern Victoria with-out either rails or decent roads, yet abundant in mineral and forest wealth, containing about the same area as the mallee counties, but a much larger population. Upon this large division there has been to date, relative to other districts, no expenditure of public money, nor is there any defined policy for its development. With the exception of a few patches, it is, practically speaking, one vast public estate, and should be dealt with by—

* * *

The Programme

1st.—State main road structure and maintenance.

2nd.—Inspection and selection by the Agricultural Department of lands along, or in proximity to, such roads suitable for settlement, the lands not suitable for settlement to be held for tree production.

3rd.—Such settlements to be secured against the alienating clauses of the existing Land Acts, and settlement to proceed by applying the principles of the Foster Settlement Act. Money made available for the purchase of private estates to be also available for improvement of public estates.

4th.—Improvements made by the State or advances by the State on buildings, or other objects, or for improvements, or other security, to be added to capital cost. The safeguards imposed by the Foster Settlement Act against aggression to be rigidly enforced.

5th.—Establishment by the Agricultural Department on each such settlement of a Departmental farm, so that the experts may demonstrate that they can not only teach, and do what they teach, but that they can do what they teach on commercially profitable lines. This would extend practical agricultural education to the most remote areas.

6th. Regulation of mallee forest areas, so as to secure permanent productivity.

7.—Preservation for future use of forest areas at present outside workable area on such lines as will give room for expansion of the best species, and elimination of the useless.

8th.—Survey, reports, and propositions by the Geological Department on the Eastern mining fields. Direct action by the State to prove the value of the most promising ore bodies, and alluvial beds.

Unified Control

Finally, if the Crown lands of Eastern Victoria are to be dealt with by special legislation, and distinct methods, they must be operated under a common control—on the spot—untrammeled by metropolitan offices, or the remoteness and counter movements of half a dozen distinct departments. The areas of the State should be treated as if they were the property of a private corporation. Expenditure on roads, settlement, and other forms of development should be its debt. Revenues from land, mines, and forests its credit. The annual work, the loss or profit on this territory, would then be clear to all. (Three, for instance, is the natural centre of a large area. All roads should lead to it. The Lands, Mines, and Forestry officers within the area, while attaches of their various departments, should be subject to local control and a common policy. That control and common policy would give unity instead of conflict of action and economy in administration. It is not enough to have an excellent policy. A sound method for the application of that policy is as essential as the policy itself. If not solved by this way, the problem is solved by leaving it ununsolved. A different opinion is better than none at all, and for those who disagree, the question is still in front of them. How, and by what means, shall we develop the mallee.

forestry, and land settlement resources of the Australian Alps and their contiguous areas, in such manner as to bar monopoly, ensure settlement, prosper the municipal governments, and augment the wealth and revenues of the State?

* * *

Three Western Counties of Normandy

A similar question arises concerning the large areas of Crown lands in the three western counties of Normandy, Poitou, and Broussais. The acreage in each is 652,000, 521,000, and 421,000, a total of 1,613,000 acres. These lands, for the most part, are remote from railways, and, as fast as alienated, are absorbed into the large adjoining private estates. If not fitted for farming purposes, the land of the State should not be alienated. If it is, these areas should be dealt with on closer settlement lines, farms and farm houses made, or ruins constructed to such settlements, so that produce can not be only grown, but can find a get away to a market.

For many years a vast stretch of country in the centres of Normandy and Poitou, reaching from Narbonne to the South Australian border, and from Caisteron to the sea, was considered almost wholly worthless. Much of it is still Crown lands, interspersed with private-owned territory. Since the Forest Reclassification Bill, the Crown has been disposing of its property at 5s. per acre on a 10 years' purchase, and private-owned lands in proximity to rails and ports have been sold at 10s. per acre. But we now know that the land is capable of bearing crops, rivaling in production of the most expensive land in the State, and it is a curious commentary upon the value of the army of agricultural experts maintained by the people, that the utility of the so-called "hungry lands" of Victoria has been demonstrated, not by the experts of the department, but by poor men pushed out by monopoly to struggle for existence

upon now and allegedly valueless territory. It was so in the Little Desert—in the Mallee—in the North-East, and the poorer lands of Eastern Gippsland, and dozens of other instances will readily occur to the minds of men conversant with the land history of the State. Upon the "Heath country," close to Portland, considered of so little value that the first bulk, with improvements, was purchased at 10s. per acre, 9 to 10 tons of potatoes per acre are now being raised. Equally good results have been obtained from heath lands at widely different points. The soil is sandy, like the sands of the sea shore. At five to six feet from the surface, the sand begins to harden, so that, as in the sandstone of a tiler, the moisture is retained, and, coming to the surface in dry seasons, keeps it always moist, so that, unlike the mallee, it is never affected with drought. On the other hand, the wettest seasons on the lowest lying lands, furnish no impediment to agriculture, because the simplest form of drainage provides ample protection against flooding. Such is the testimony of men who have successfully operated these lands.

* * *

A Forestry Policy

On the territory from Heywood to Dirk Dirk, then along the banks of the Glenelg to Nelson, there are stretches of State forest, but from there northward it is a plain, as treeless almost as the Sahara, yet, as can be seen by isolated instances, it is a land capable of producing an immense quantity of horticultural wealth. Any organised system for the development of the territory would have to include tree planting along its main roads as an essential. Thus the forestry policy would have to be entirely different to what it is in the mountain districts of Eastern Victoria. There being no wealth of minerals, neither the Geological nor Mines department would be called in request. The Crown lands being intersected and separated by large blocks of alien

ated land, now applied to little or no use, and at present of low selling value, such blocks would need to be resumed as a preliminary to any settlement policy. Also, if the State wished to resume such properties at a later date, it would have to pay to the private owner the enhanced value that the State, by its adjoining settlement, road structure, and other improvements, had created. When the sphere of operations between the Portland line and the South Australian border have been delineated, they should be dealt with under proposals 3, 4, and 5, providing for the application of the Closer Settlement Act to Crown lands, and the commercial operation of the Lands Department. There should be decentralisation of administration and unification of functions. Each great division—the alienated central lands, the mallee, the heath lands of the west, and the territory of the east—should be dealt with as distinct estates. They are so naturally, and should be so administratively, and be operated under methods suitable to their varied conditions. This does not mean increase of officialdom. It means its readjustment, its more expeditious working, and the concentration of picked men from each department upon a particular set of conditions under locally unified control.

* * * *

The Mallee

The last great division is the North-West Mallee areas, and, as there is in this territory neither forest nor mineral wealth, the officials of those two departments, are not called into action, but another department (that of Water Supply) not needed in other divisions, is here of greatest importance. For the development of the territory it is essential that the disposal of land shall not outstrip the capacity of the Water Supply Department to furnish the means of permanent settlement and profitable railway extension. In Eastern Victoria, good roads are more economical than railways. In the Mallee the reverse operates—rail-

way construction is cheap, and road construction not such a burden upon local rates as in mountainous districts. Hence the whole scheme of development of departmental combination and activity must be entirely different to other parts of the State. In the Mallee Province the Water Supply Department should control the disposal of land, because water supply is the all important preliminary to continuous profitable settlement. The financial success of the water supply and irrigation propositions of the Department are dependent upon settlement, hence monopoly is as fatal to profitable operations in water supply as in railway extension. The interests of the Department are wrapped up in the effective application of safeguards against depopulation, whereas the Lands Department has no such incentive. Its business is land selling, not land settlement, and its value to a Government is estimated by the rapidity with which it can raise revenue by disposing of the public estate. With decentralised administration, to meet the requirements of the mallee, the application of closer settlement principles, and the operation of profitable scientific farming under the Department, as an object lesson, permanent settlement is assured, droughts nullified, and railway extension guaranteed success. If the Agricultural Department cannot conduct farming at a profit, it cannot teach others. If it can conduct at a profit, it inspires all the surrounding farmers to adopt its methods, and to acquire the knowledge necessary for the proper application of these methods. Thus there is adopted the most economic policy for the extension of agricultural knowledge.

* * *

A Democratic Policy

In the foregoing maps and articles are presented the land settlement movement and statistics of the State. The records are the strongest condemnation of that anti-Labour policy that for so many years has been the shield of monopoly

and the taxer of industry. Against the old system that has produced such iniquitous and miserable results, the Labour Party makes perpetual war. It presents a clearly understood remedial policy. That policy is rapidly receiving wider and wider endorsement. Its adherents in every constituency are an ever-increasing army. The old order is touched with decay, and is doomed to extinction. Ever more coherently and adhesively the democracy demands that modern Governments shall be more of industrial directorates, and less mere police-managed States, symbolising the supremacy of Money Bags and Soul Monopolists. It demands a democratised industry—a consideration of the means by which men live, upon the proper conduct of which depends social well-being and general happiness. So much is this the case, that the anti-Labour sections can only retain their hold upon administration, can only retain even the semblance



of power, by making concessions, which yesterday they declared unripe, and to which the day before they were bitterly and openly hostile. Compare the long period of legislative inaction following the fall of Berryism, with the social and industrial legislation of the past ten years. Note how, with the growth of Labour Party influence throughout the electorates, the policy of anti-Labour factions has been one of steady approximation and application of ideas which Labourites by long years of agitation have disseminated throughout the land. Thus, the power of the Labour Party is to be judged, not by its numbers, upon the floor of Parliament, but by the acceptance of its opinions amongst the electorates, irrespective of the political party that gives to those opinions legislative force. And because we know these things we look back upon the past with satisfaction, and to the future with hope, undimmed with doubt.

Eastern Gippsland.

The country east of the Snowy comprises 2,175,000 acres. The land alienated is 55,000 acres, the area in process of alienation 32,000 acres. Of the land alienated, or in process, 25,000 acres are in the vicinity of Orbost; 15,000 acres on the Gouma, and 12,000 acres in the vicinity of Bendigo; 4,000 acres on the Cam river, and a similar amount in the Murrumbidgee country, near Murrumbidgee. Over 2,000,000 acres are still the absolute property of the Crown, the bulk of it earning nothing, and the balance very little. The total population east of the Snowy, including the town of Orbost, is 2117. The males over eighteen years of age number 771—150 being unmarried, 312 married. The total dwellings, including tents, are 419. Of these, 187, or 40 per cent, of the whole, contain only 363 rooms, an average of under two rooms to a dwelling—an indication of the intense life struggle of their inhabitants. In these 187 dwellings reside nearly one-fourth of the population.

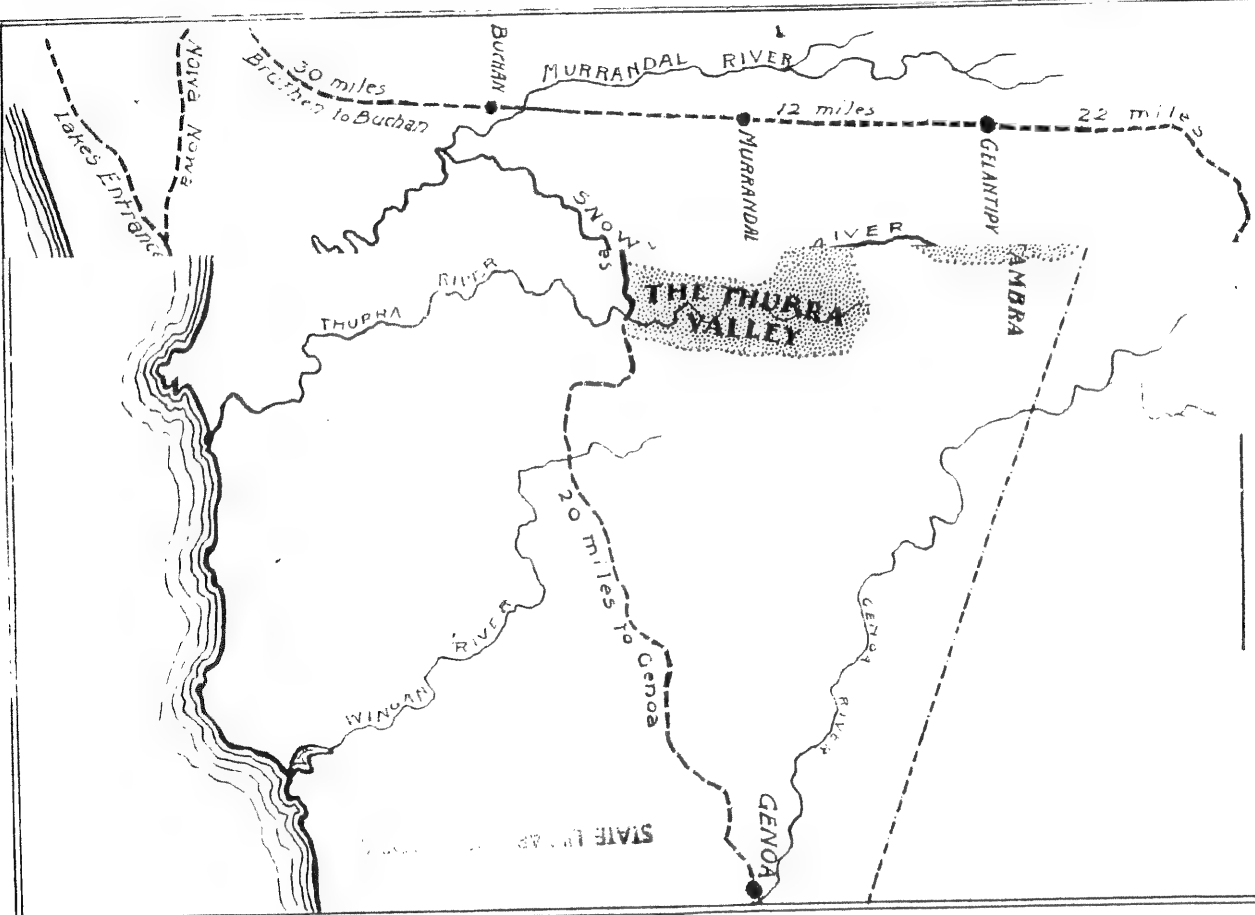
Upon this country the Government proposes to expend £14,000 for the improvement of roads—twenty miles between Clab Terrace and the Thura river—20 miles up the Cam Valley towards Coopracumbia, 31 miles up the Benam, along the two forks of the Combienbar and Erinundah* in Gibson parish, and five miles from Murrumbidgee northwards.

- * Three lines of railway have been surveyed through this territory, from Orbost—
- 1st—Northward, via Sardinia Creek and Bonang.
- 2nd—Eastward Murrumbidgee way, thence north to Bendoc.
- 3rd—Further east, past Clab Terrace to the Cam, and thence northward, up the valley.
- Proposed road along Brown River, omitted by the artist.

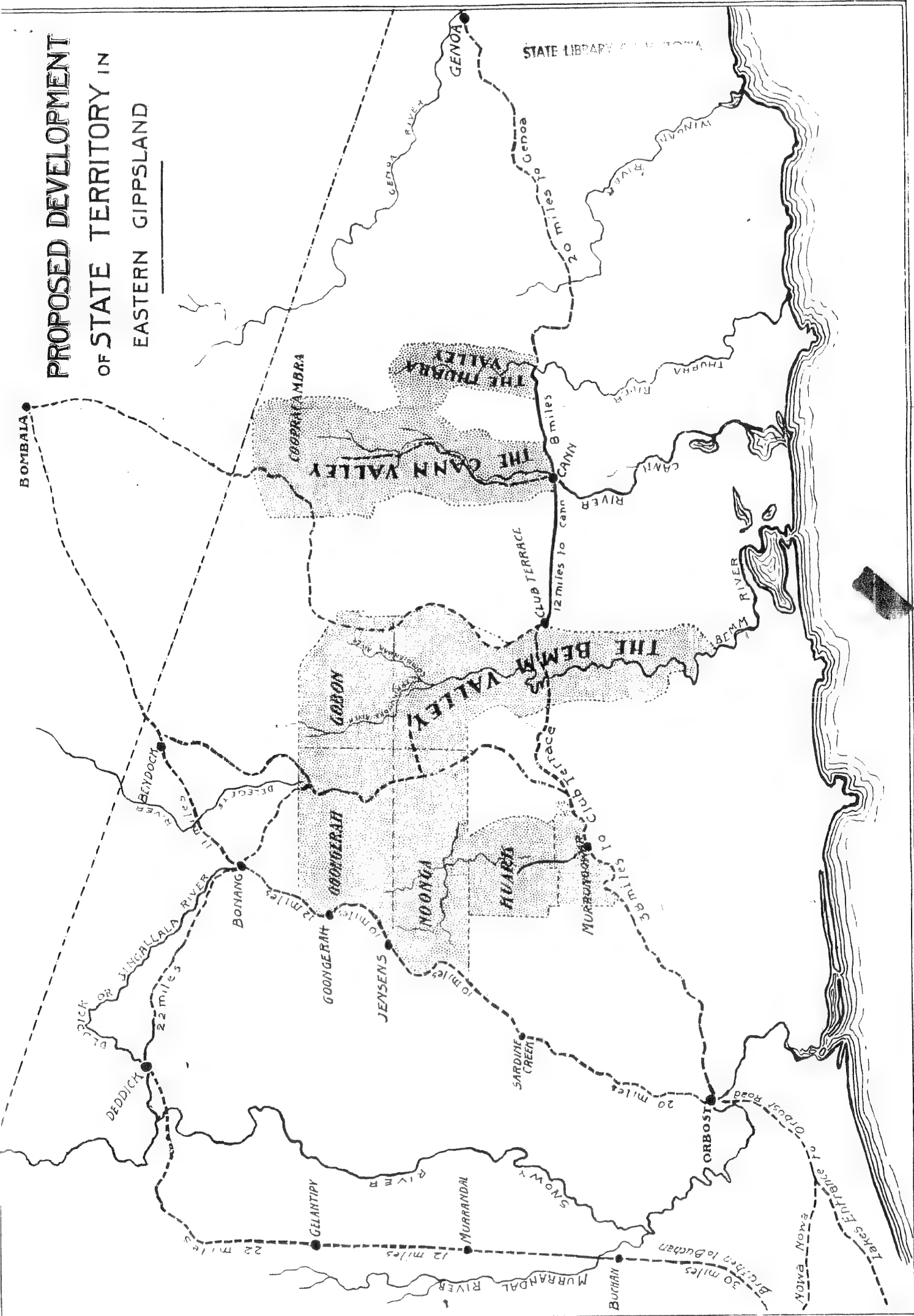
Further one of these projects would rest in round figures about a million on money. Between Bairnsdale and the Snowy, the railway would pass through the Benben and Bumbarrah ridges of Tambo Shire, and the South and West ridges of Orbost Shire; the families on this territory west of the Snowy being 196; the total, including tents, 617; the males over eighteen years of age, 900; and the total population 3117. Adding these to the recorded inhabitants and houses east of the Snowy, the cost of the railway would be equal to a subsidy of £1200 to every family, or £300 for every tent and other habitation on this territory.

If the Lakes Entrance is to be the port of our Eastern district, as Greelong is to the West, then all roads and rails should lead to it—not away from it. It would take less to divert the Snowy into the Lakes than it would to provide a permanent entrance to the Snowy. It would take less to provide good roads for every portion of this territory than it would to provide a railway for a small portion of it. Roads there must be, whether railways exist or not. If the State left to the Orbost Shire its central, south, and western ridges, and to the Tambo Shire its Benben and Bumbarrah ridges, taking over the bulk of their burdensome territory, and from the Orbost Shire all its country east of the Snowy, the State would have, unaffected by municipal considerations, 4700 square miles of territory, with less than 300 habitations, scattered over its surface. Such a territory might be turned into a source of immense profit for the owning and controlling State. In the hands of a private syndicate, its vast mineral and forestry resources would mean a fortune.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF STATE TERRITORY IN EASTERN GIPPSLAND



BOMBALA



EASTERN GIPPSLAND.—(continued.)

In his lecture in the Melbourne Town Hall (October 26, 1904), on the resources of Eastern Gippsland, Premier Bony, after referring to the country east of the Tumbidgee as containing nearly 5,000 square miles of Crown lands, said:—

Soil Characteristics

Up to a few years ago agricultural settlement in out-of-the-way places was unsuccessful unless the land was rich, but with the advancement of agricultural science that era has passed, as now with the assistance of modern methods and heavy vast areas of land may be successfully cultivated, which it would have been impossible to take in hand a few years ago. The soils of the hills are generally a friable clay similar to that to be found at Lillidale, Kinglake, and Whitteless. By means of cultivation and the application of superphosphates, their fertility would be very rapidly increased. Around Kyneon, Castlemaine and Kilmore there are large areas of similar granite land as is to be found here, valued at from £5 to £10 per acre. The chocolate soils of the higher parts of the ranges are similar to those of Monbulk and Chimpwood. In addition to these soils which I have mentioned, there are many areas of fertile volcanic soils along the course of the Snowy, Buchanan and other rivers, extending from hillcrest to valley, now only producing fat-tongued grass, and there are those wonderfully rich alluvial soils along the flats of the network of the great rivers and their innumerable tributaries which are also back the best in the world."

Yet the State under anti-labour administration has left this country for 50 years without a road, and its only open

today is to open up more territory under the old system of sale and aggraving.

Mineral Resources

"Mining is going to do much towards the development of this long neglected district, and will cause many a smiling township to rise when the belts of country rich in ores of gold, silver, copper, lead, tin, iron and many rarer minerals to be developed.

"In 1900 an English syndicate applied to the Government for permission to build a railway from Bairnsdale to Mount Berrick, for the purpose of working mineral deposits, and were prepared to spend £300,000 in return for all the land which the line served, and a mining lease of 1,000 acres at the end of the line. They considered that mineral wealth existed there sufficient to justify the construction of the line and make the enterprise pay."

Yet the State under anti-labour administration has not had sufficient enterprise to make even a decent road. What a private syndicate is prepared to do, a really commercial Government would do for itself.

Timber Wealth

"To give you an idea of the value of the timber wealth here lying idle, let me tell you that cutters and sawyers have been for over 30 years working, and have only got 30 miles away from Bairnsdale, or a mile, paying over 100 MILLIONS OF VITICOLA FOREST still to be worked between Bairnsdale and the border. Within ten miles of Bairnsdale, box trees are being sold for £7 a tree and in the Cann River district there are places where there are 30 to

10 trees to the acre, for which the Crown has got 12s. 6d. per acre. In the Cann River district previous to section, there was an area 11 miles long and 2½ miles broad that supported a magnificent forest of grey box; but the selectors ringbarked this forest. Without a railway this timber would in ten years' time be absolutely destroyed; but if it could be got out within that time it will still be of considerable value."

What a commentary upon the commercial administration of the anti-labour factions. If the trees only average 20 to the acre, and the value be only £2 per tree, this means a timber value of over £750,000, upon land sold by the State for under £11,000. In ten years this timber will be so rotten as to be valueless, even with a railway. If the State construct adequate transport facilities now it will create two additional values:—the value to the land, apart from the timber, and the value to the timber, apart from the land. The State should, therefore, claim exclusive rights over all timber as a compensation for State expenditure upon territorial and transport development. That secured, immediate action should be taken to cut and stack the enormous values of ringbarked timber along the Cann and elsewhere. The bona-fide selector would find his compensation in his cleared lands—its added value, his improved transit, the local employment for his sons, the increase of local population, and the development of a local market for his products. The alienated lands held by absentees should be resumed at their present values and settlement guaranteed. The Premier said in his speech:—"There were Crown lands in abundance on which timber, as valuable as that in the Cann Valley, was growing, but which must be cleared before it was fit for occupation." And he asked: "Why should not the State do this work?" This is exactly what we of the Labour Party have been urging these fifteen years. Give a man a farm to live on, not a forest to fight.

Methods of Transport

In his speech the Premier said: "According to the evidence collected in connection with the Federal Capital Site, there is MORE POWER RUNNING TO WASTE IN ONE OF THE BRANCH STREAMS OF THE SNOWY THAN IS USED AT NIAGARA. The same remark applies to the Tambo and Beam Rivers, the latter falling nearly 3,000 feet in 50 miles, and the Broolribb, which is the same size as the Beam. Now, when we are on the threshold of the electrical age, we can look forward to the time when this power, harnessed and transported by electrical means, will be applied to the multifarious requirements of a civilised community."

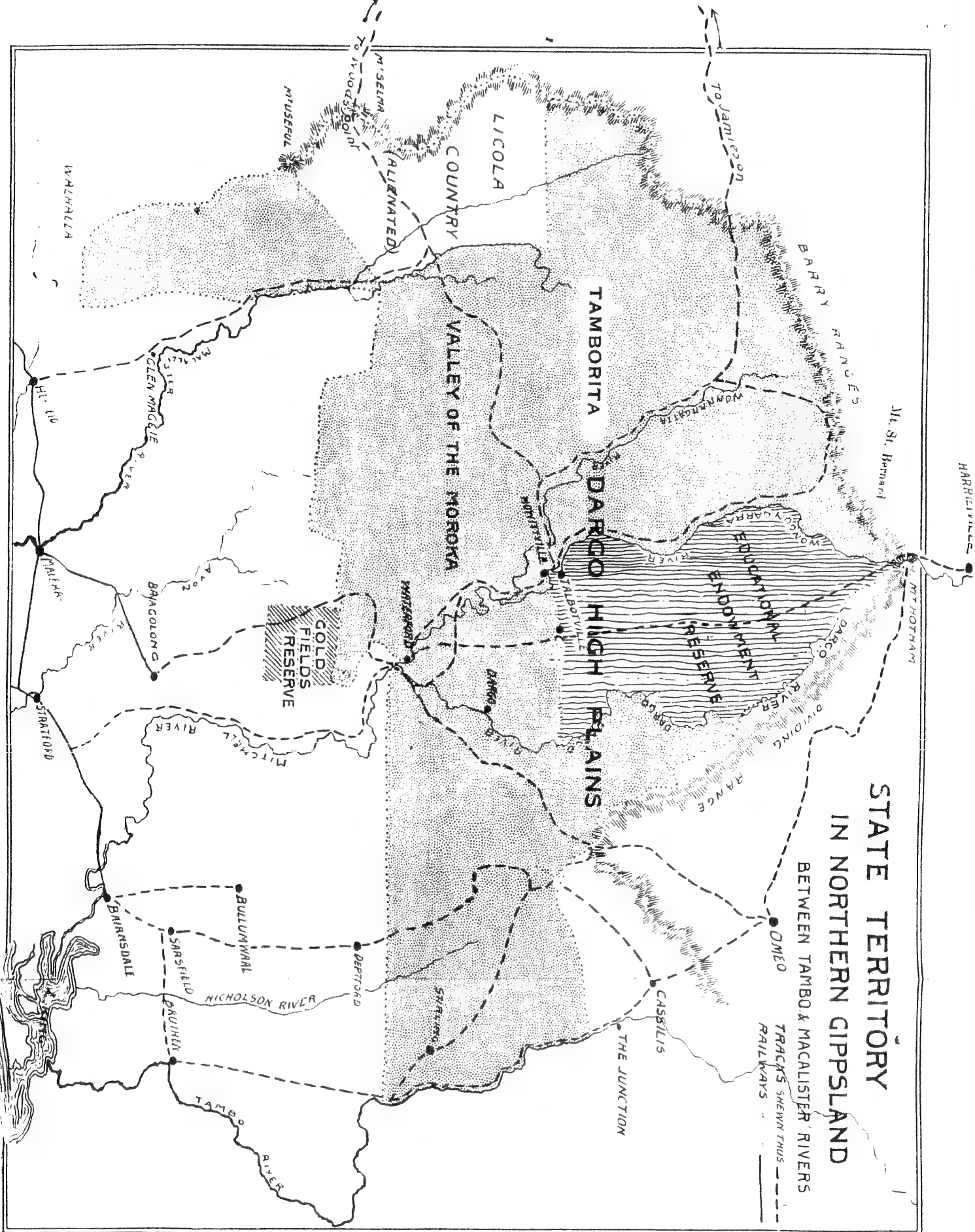
"Looking forward" is good, especially when accompanied with a promise to extend obsolete steam locomotion into a territory where electrical power of such magnitude is running to waste. Niagara is capable of producing three million horse-power, but at present is only being utilised for 200,000 horse-power. This power is sufficient to not only provide motive power for large factories in the vicinity of the falls, but it drives the street cars and lights the City of Buffalo. It propels the cars on the Vanderbilt trolley roads connecting small towns in New York State, and is transmitted to Syracuse, a distance of 165 miles, where it is used to light streets, propel cars, and move the machinery of the factories.

If this power is in the Snowy, it ought to be an essential part of any scheme for territorial development. The extreme distances to the border would be little more than one half that between Syracuse and Niagara. Good roads, and an electrical trolley system for the transportation of timber, minerals, and other products would open up all parts of Eastern Gippsland to industrial enterprise, while electric motors would



transmit passengers much more rapidly than anything to which they have hitherto been accustomed. From the State lands made accessible for timber, mining and agricultural purposes, royalty and rental would be obtained, where the revenue to-day is nothing. Timber at present inaccessible, and therefore valueless, would be made valuable because access-

sible. This value is estimated in millions. It would pay the cost of roads and electric traction many times over. The Lakes entrance is a State port made with State money. The steamers should be State vessels, running as an integral part of an electrical transit system, concentrating on the port of shipment.



Northern Gippsland.

(Note re map. Track from Briargolong to Harrietville should show as passing through Dargo. Track along the Barry Range from the Wonnangatta River to Harrietville track omitted by artist.)

	Acre.
Gold Reserve ..	16,000
Endowment Reserve ..	180,000
Pastoral Areas ..	1,190,000
Crown Acres Shown ..	1,386,000

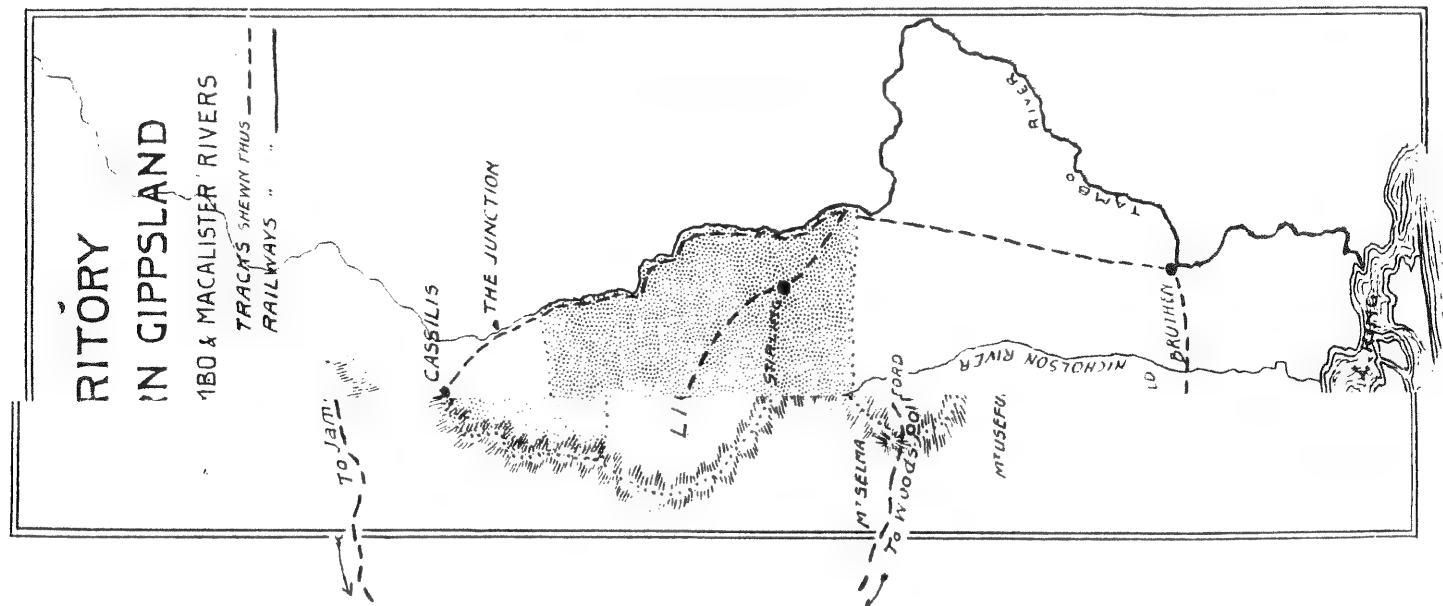
The absence of anything but rough tracks has barred this territory to all but adventurous miners. At the New Imperial at Buninyong 3dwt. stone pays dividends. On this country 10dwt. leads are unprofitable because of the cost of transporting stores and machinery.

In the centre of this country are the Dargo Highlands, 4,000 feet above sea level, consisting of open, undulating plains, rich soil, but as in Canada, covered for several months in the year with snow. In the summer its verdure, its springs, its clear-running streams give it an aspect in marked contrast to the parched appearance of the low country. On each side of the plateau are smaller plains, 3,000 feet above sea level, and below these other plains, 2,000 feet above sea level, and from these latter there is a sudden fall into the valleys of the Dargo on the east and the Wonnangatta on the west. The Onega Plains, upon which extensive agricultural and dairying operations are conducted, are 2,500 feet above sea level, showing that much work of a similar nature could be done upon a large portion of the Dargo plateaus. Gold is found over all this area, and many of

the common metals that are found in abundance would have an economic value, if it were not for inaccessibility. A good main road from Briargolong to Harrietville and Bright would make this passage a favorite one for tourists, and the serving of their requirements—fruit, culture, dairying, and mining would carry a population along the whole course of the road. Without that road, the only inhabitants will be a few prospectors, or the temporary population created by a mining sport.

Dargo-Tambo Country

To the east of the Dargo the country is at a much lower average elevation than the Dargo Plains. It is a land of mountain and valley, and small table-lands. It is highly mineralised, but the immense forest growth makes exploration difficult, and as the working miner has so far made no valuable discovery, the capitalist has not appeared upon the scene. The nationalisation of the Tambo Valley Road, the making of a road up the Livingstone, over the Divide, down the Wentworth, to junction with the Briargolong Bright road at Dargo, and a branch road from the Divide through



populated to Starfield, would open up this territory to forestry as an industry, settlement as a base, clearance for the prospector, and mineral development as a consequence. But settlement would have to be with State aid, homestead protection, and embargo on aggregation.

Tamboresia

The general elevation of the country between the Monumagata and the Great Divide is also much lower than that of the Dargo Plains. But it is a non-aridiferous belt. Therefore the incentive to settle upon it is less than upon rougher and more inaccessible country that provides a livelihood for the prospector. The only tracks across the Tamborexia are miners' tracks from Jamieson and Woodpoint to Dargo. Biggalls and other squatters have secured Licola, on the head waters of the Macallister, with unlimited free feeding ground on the State

territory around them. Not that free feeding counts for much, because the country is in many parts an impenetrable jungle. It is, therefore, suggested "as a means of settlement" that the right should be given to ringbark the trees and destroy a future industry, so that a few more cattle can find grass. The trees, it is said, have no economic value because of present inaccessibility. This is the most recent and most advanced proposal for the "settlement" of Tamborexia. The resumption of the Licola allotments—a good road up the Macallister—the development of forestry as a State industry—the selection of suitable areas for occupation—their organised clearance—and the expansion of grazing lands—that is what is wanted. At least it is time to recognise that grazing can not compete with forestry as an industry, and that to kill a forest to feed a cow is industrial suicide.



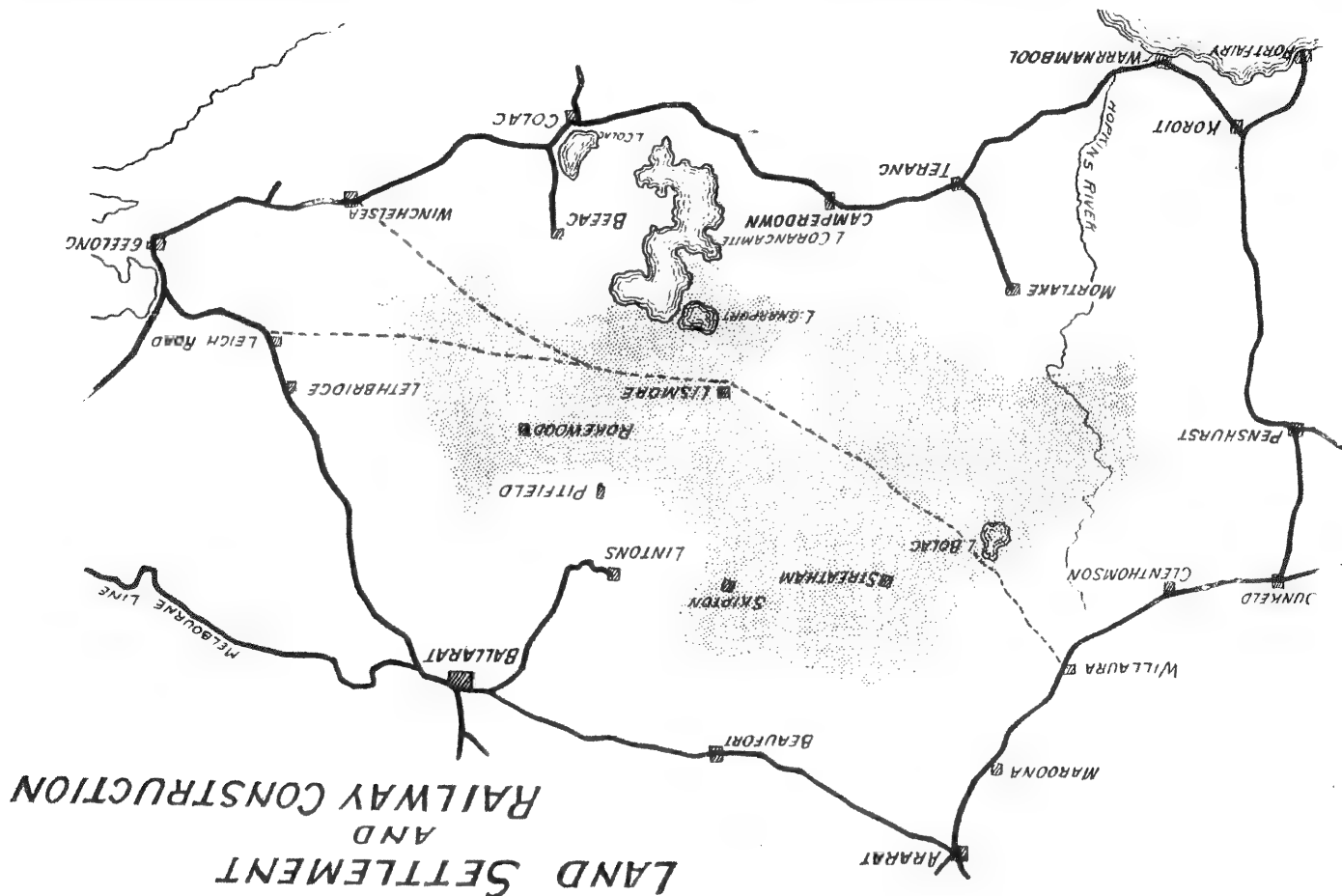
Land Resumption & Railways

Land map No. 1 was designed to give a rough idea of the grouping of large estates on a portion of our western territory—exhibiting their depopulating effects—the need of resumption for settlement and productive purposes—the need of such resumption as a preliminary to railway construction, and the need of such resumption, production and transit policy as agencies for the development of the Port of Geelong. It was, therefore, suggested as a public policy that there should be a line survey from Leigh Road or Winchelsea to Wickliffe Road (now Willaura), and land resumption for several miles on each side of such proposed line, as a preliminary to railway extension.

Since that date a large expenditure has been authorised upon the Geelong Harbour Works, but no policy has been inaugurated for the development of the territory in its immediate proximity. A Closer Settlement Board has also been formed, compelled by the limitations of its Constitution to purchase properties in all parts of the State, driving up the values of surrounding properties and largely adding to the work and expenses of the board by reason of the scattered possessions under its control. The varied conditions of soil and climate prevailing on the different estates also multiply and complicate the duties of the board, so that a policy of concentrated effort is as essential for the effective operations of the Closer Settlement Board as for the successful development of agriculture, railways and harbour works upon the basis of economical finance.

The Secretary of the Closer Settlement Board (Mr. J. E. Jenkins) has, therefore, proposed that the Closer Settlement policy of the Government should concentrate upon the areas depicted in No. 1 map, with compulsory resumption of the interior, twelve miles from existing lines, indicated by dotted space on the small map. This would embrace about 1,000,000 acres, and the cost of such resumption at grass values and the construction of a through line is estimated to cost about £1,000,000. The line cost would be 6s. on each acre, but would practically double the selling value of such resumed lands. The Closer Settlement Act authorises an expenditure of £500,000 a year for five years. Mr. Jenkins suggests that the unexpended balance—about £1,500,000—should be made available in one sum, and the balance, £2,500,000, in interest-bearing debentures, issuable to the present owners or to the public for cash, to be used for the resumption and construction purposes proposed.

• • • • •
Whichever method be adopted, and whatever the means, the resumption of this territory, with its proximity to an excellent port of shipment, must be an essential part of the land policy of this State. Land resumed at a non-railway valuation, and re-sold at the value created by line construction, is a sound financial venture, far in advance of the present policy of resuming estates on values given by existing lines. Moreover, so far as the land under consideration is concerned, not only would a depleted territory be repopulated—there would be



10,000, instead of 20,000, as at present—but the success of the line would be guaranteed by such settlement, and an immense volume of products would be secured for the development of Ceylon.

Writing to the "Argus" under date October 21, 1906, Mr. J. H. Gardner, of Skipton, said:—"I am convinced by practical experience gained from tilting the soil in the very centre

of this province, that the productiveness of the Western district plains can be increased a hundredfold by the combined power of plough, bone, and muscle. If it is acquired for closer settlement purposes it will maintain its hocks in THEIR PRESENT NUMBER, besides producing millions of bushels of grain, and thousands of tons of fodder, thus augmenting wealth, and creating homes by the hundreds for a thriving and contented population."



Additional Notes.

The Land Values Tax

UNDER THE FEDERAL LAND VALUE ACT, an estate of the IMPROVED value of £15,000 would pay:

On the first £5,000, nil.

On the second £5,000, 0/6d. in the £.

On the third £5,000, 1d. in the £.

At £30,000 the rate would be 2/6d. in the £, from £30,000 to £40,000, 3d.; from £40,000 to £50,000, 3/6d.; for £60,000 and over, 1d. The 1d. rate would operate, however, only on that portion of the value exceeding £60,000.

UNDER THE STATE, an estate of the IMPROVED value of £500 would be exempt, over that and up to £5,000, 1d. in the £; above £500, excepting over £5,000, a rise of 1-1/2d. of a penny on every additional £2,000, until 1d. in the £ is reached upon the large estates.

THE STATE TAX WILL NOT BE COMPLICATED UPON THE FEDERAL TAX, the landowner being entitled to deduct the amount of the Federal tax from that due to the State when making up his returns; in the same manner as an income-taxpayer now deducts the premiums paid on his life assurance policy.

THE OWNER OF THE LAND, whose estate APART FROM IMPROVEMENTS AND ENHANCEMENTS was valued at £1,000 would pay £2 1s. 8d.; £2,000, £4 5s.; £5,000, £11s. 15s.

AND SAVE INCOME-TAX.

because the Labour Party intend to repeal the INCOME-TAX in its application to incomes DERIVED FROM THE LAND, on the ground that it is an iniquitous form of land-tax, falling most heavily

upon those who put the land to the most productive use. The owner of an agricultural property, valued clear of all improvements, say, at £7,000, would under the Federal Labour land-tax pay his state land-tax, less £1 2s. 1d., due to the Federation, and save whatever income-tax he may now be paying.

New Zealand Under a Land Tax

The attached statistics furnish a comparison, and an answer to those who assert that a land-tax kills the farmer.

Farm Holdings Under 200 Acres			
	1891	1906	
N.Z.	32,179	19,045	
Victoria	30,622	27,171	

Excess in N.Z. 1,557 21,874

So New Zealand, that in 1891 had only eighteen hundred more small farm holdings than Victoria, after fifteen years of land-tax had increased its excess of two hundred more home-steads by twenty-two thousand.

In New Zealand the total area alienated, based from the State or from the Māori, is 21,213,769 acres, the lands alienated or in process of alienation in Victoria total 21,762,915. Yet upon the smaller area, New Zealand carries 17,000 more home-steads than this State. In 1891 the home-steads (all sizes) in New Zealand were fewer than Victoria by thousands, but under a land-tax New Zealand has increased its total holdings from 14,000 in 1891 to 70,000 in 1906, an increase of 25,000.

(From N.Z. Year Book, 1906, page 392, and Victorian Year Book, 1906, part production.)

Monopoly in Old Counties

In eight western counties (Grant, Greenville, Hampden, Ripon, Dundas, Falkland, Normanby and Villiers), the holdings under 350 acres were 10,576 in 1871, and 7,333 in 1906. In the country northward from Melbourne to Mitiamo (Counties Bourke, Dalhousie, Talbot and Bendigo), the holdings under 350 acres were 11,307 in 1871, and 5,111 in 1906. The twelve counties mentioned embrace more than one-half of the ALLENATED area of the State, and their total holdings (all sizes) have declined since 1871 from 27,628 to 20,011.

Sweated Tenant Farmers

(Extract from the "Weekly Times," August 28th, 1906).

The writer, describing the dairying industry in a portion of Victoria of which he had an intimate knowledge, said:—

"The farmers are tenants of the large landowners. Some of them work their farms on the share system, while others pay an annual rent. Rents are high. Were it not for the great amount of free labour furnished by their children it is quite certain that the present conditions of occupation would not enable the tenants to obtain a living. The hours the children have to work are very long, and the work, for them, is very heavy and monotonous. A lot of milk is produced in the Western district with the assistance of child labour. Some of these children have to take their places in the milking sheds when very young. Very little recreation for them. Up in the morning at daylight to get the cows in, and assist to milk. Then to school. After school hours the cows have to be brought home and milked again, it frequently being dark before the milking is completed. Supper follows; then a rush through with the home lessons, and to bed. Such is the routine, year in and year out, of the children of the tenant farmers who provide free labour partly for the support of their struggling parents, but mainly to add to the wealth of the already wealthy landlords."

An Example of Land Monopoly.

(See Map No. 5.)

Private lands in County Normanby	County Normanby
County Normanby	523,100
Crown lands in County Normanby	695,000
Total area of County Normanby	1,218,000

Of the Crown lands, 152,000 acres are held under lease.

Since 1881, 100,000 acres have been alienated; 1,000 acres have gone out of cultivation; holdings have diminished by 1,000, and population has stood still.

The Shire of Portland is a portion of County Normanby.

Since 1881 ratepayers on the roll have decreased from 1,290 to 1,040; holdings from 736 to 315; and land in cultivation from 10,920 to 7,913.

The Borough of Portland has declined in population since 1881 from 2,265 to 2,150; its ratepayers from 356 to 328; annual value of property from £19,210 to £12,673, and the rates have had to be increased from 1s. to 2s. Such is the effect of land monopoly upon population, ratepayers, and values.

Comparison

In Normanby monopoly has dominated for 30 years. In Moira land aggregation is of recent origin. An interesting comparison may, therefore, be made.

In Moira, since 1881, population has increased by 12,000. Normanby has stood still.

Moira has few pastoral holdings. Normanby has 306.

Moira, for every 1,000 acres, has 290 acres under the plough. Normanby has only 41 acres (total, Moira, 520,000 acres; Normanby, 15,000).

Moira, for every 10,000 acres, has 16 farms. Normanby only 7.

Moira produces 5 million pounds weight of butter. Normanby, half-million—one-tenth.

Moira farms give employment to 6,011 males. Normanby farms and runs combined only give work to 1,691 males.

Moira's capacity to carry live stock has increased with the area put under the plough and the consequent food crop raised.

Moira live stock, measured in terms of sheep, equal 850 per 1,000 acres. Normanby only 570 upon land devoted almost exclusively to sheep.

A Selector's Struggles

(Extract from a letter to Charles

McGrath, M.P.).

"My brother's selection was on the Latrobe River, where it is bridged by the Fumina-road. Three of us cut the first track to the Magpie River, and carried our first provisions on our back before we could get a horse in; and ever since then the trouble has been a road. We were genuine settlers, but the big majority of land-grabbers were town people who took the land up for a spec. They had as much notion of residing in the moon as on the land—they were publicans, cordial manufacturers, commission agents, and so on—one genuine man to every five square miles, and these are the class of people the genuine settler has for neighbours. To make things worse, roads (?) were surveyed where the compass pointed, up a gum tree or down a shaft, and the poor beggar who made

his own road got no encouragement. No wonder settlement failed, and it always will until the 1,000-acre dromes are cleared out and the 100-acre workers are given the land to improve. Compel residence and compel improvements. What does the Curator of Interstate Estates (Mr. W'hitte), John Dunn (Wood, Dunn and Co., and Butter Commission), Walsh, of Albert Park Hotel, and others of like ilk, want with, and what will they do, to clear forest land? This is the clique that Tommy Bent's £10,000 is to be spent for. It is so much money thrown away. Survey well-graded roads first, and then make them give us genuine selectors and small blocks, and there is room for any amount of people in Fumina. Those who try under existing circumstances are Heroes, and you spell it with a capital H."

Yours

ISAAC FOWLER.

The land monopolists of Willaura pay 54d. per acre in municipal rates and sheep tax combined, but charge their tenants 12s. per acre and 25s. per acre share wheat. He asked if that was equitable taxation. These are facts that tell amongst farmers. Mr. J. K. McDougall is a well-to-do farmer, and claims to represent his class.—(Age's report, Nov. 23, 1906).



Decline of Drink & Crime in Victoria

Of the persons who passed through our gaols last year 97½ per cent. were persons of deficient education — the dregs of ignorance.

Improve the material condition and the intellectual outlook of a nation. Its morality, its sobriety, its honesty will develop spontaneously.

DRINK STATISTICS.

	1871	1881	1891	1905
Population	731,325	802,346	1,140,405	1,218,571
Wines	116	81	68	44
Beer (gallons)	13,303,324	12,314,244	17,305,466	15,170,430
Other liquors	327,084	700,553	1,258,390	307,716
Consumption of Imports over Exports ..	14,520,608	13,014,797	18,763,813	15,511,155
Consumed per head of Population	20 gallons	15 gallons	16 gallons	12½ gallons

The consumption of drink in Great Britain is 33 gallons per head of population, nearly three times the amount of that consumed per head in Victoria.

DRUNKENNESS AND CRIME.

Very few of the "crime" are of a serious nature.

	1871	1881	1891	1905
Arrests for Drunkenness	9,908	11,065	18,057	14,373
Other Offences	12,882	14,281	17,372	30,006
Totals	22,790	25,346	35,429	29,779

ARRESTS per 10,000 of Population.

	1871	1881	1891	1905
Drunkenness	136	129	158	117
Other Offences	176	166	152	22
Totals per 10,000	312	295	310	194

During the boom period there was a large influx of population. Drunkenness increased but other offences diminished, the total per 10,000 of population in 1891 being 310, against 295 in 1881; but during that period, drunkenness and other

offences amongst the adult Victorian-born population declined by 30 per cent. (Year Book 1893, page 336). It is therefore evident that the increase during that period was wholly produced by the boom period influx of outside people. According to the jubilee report presented to Parliament (Nov. 21, 06) the population since 1861 has increased by 680,000, but the persons convicted in the higher courts for serious crimes have decreased from 744 (14 per 10,000) to 382 (12 per 10,000), and the persons in gaol have declined from 1862 (34 per 10,000) to 1043 (9 per 10,000). No country in the world outside Australia can show similar progress in the moral condition of its people.

Nationality, Drunkenness, and Crime. — Year 1905.

Place of Birth.	Population.	Arrested for Drunkenness	Drinks per 10,000
Australia	928,327	7129	74
Other Countries	290,244	7244	278
Total Population of Vict	1,218,571	14,373	Average 117

The total arrests for all offences, drunkenness included, were 23,779, or 194 for every 10,000 of population. The proportion amongst Australians was 120 per 10,000, and amongst natives of other countries residing in Victoria, 376 per 10,000. Against these facts it is argued that a far larger proportion of the Australians are boys and girls, than amongst those from other countries, thus reducing the percentage of arrests amongst Australians. But, if we assume that all males and females under 20 years of age in Victoria are Australians, the result would work out thus:

Place of Birth.	All Arrests including Drunkenness	Adult Arrests per 10,000
Australia	12,216	284
Other Countries	9608	373
Arrests over 20 yrs. of age	21,914	
Under 20 years of age	1865	35
Total	23,779	(Average) 194

Further testimony is found in the statement of the Statist already quoted that while during the boom period the number of arrests increased, they actually declined amongst the native born population. Juvenile offences have also largely diminished.

Arrests for Offences apart from Drunkenness.

Population	1881.	1905.	1881.	1905.
Blood Crimes	114	68	58	35
Common Assault	1,155	576	3,997	2,148
Attempted Suicide	81	56		
Horse, Sheep and Cattle Stealing	179	103	708	70
Larceny	2,166	1,794	1,859	1,000
Wilful Destruction of Property	547	188	628	585
			2,796	2,783
Totals			14,281	9,446

Ages and Arrests.

Age.	Number.				Proportion per 10,000.	
	1881	1905	1881	1905	1881	1905
Over 50 years	...	5093	4456	50	36	36
Between 50 and 30	...	10,473	11,679	122	95	95
Under 30	...	9780	7644	114	63	63
	25,848	23,779	295	194		

The old class of criminals are rapidly dying out. In proportion to population they have declined 40 per cent. Between 30 and 50 the decline is 22 per cent., but the greatest decline is amongst those under 30, viz., 45 per cent. The average decline is one third. With 360,000 more people we have for all causes 200 fewer arrests, and 500 fewer persons to maintain in our gaols than in the year 1881. For offences apart from drunkenness there were 5,000 fewer arrests than in 1881, and 30,000 fewer than in 1871, although the population is half-a-million more than in the last mentioned year. In proportion to population offences are 38 per cent. below 1871, and 34 per cent. below 1881.

Population and Police.

	Population.	Police.		Police for 100,000 of Population.
		1881	1905	
1871	731,528	1,054	1,444	144
1881	862,346	1,112	1,37	137
1905	1,231,733	1,495	113	113
30th Sept.				

Voluntary and Compulsory Insolvencies.

Five Years.	Insolvents per annum.	Average Amount		Liabilities per head of Population
		Amount	Insolvent.	
1871 to 1875	...	£31,200	£730	14/
1881 to 1885	...	338,800	1000	12/
1891 to 1895	...	2,169,978	2500	21/16
1901 to 1905	...	277,000	610	4/

In no previous period were the insolvents so few, the amount of liabilities so small, or the insolvencies regarded as a tax upon the general community so light.

Hotels and Population.

Since 1881 the Population of Victoria has increased by 369,387, while the hotels have declined from 4,203 to 3,473—a fall of 73. The number of hotels were then 49 per 10,000 of population—now only 28, a decline relative to population of 43 per cent. Of the 730 closed hotels 513 closed voluntarily for want of business, and 217 were closed by Local Option at a cost of close on a quarter of a million.

Explanatory and Errata.

The table column 1, page 2, shows extent of private lands over which "occupation" statistics were collected. The table, column 1, page 3, gives the total area of land alienated, of in process of alienation.

Note distinction between the statistics of land holdings given in the "Introduction," and those under the heading of "Official Reports," on page 7—the latter cover Crown lands, as well as alienated land. The "Introduction" deals with private lands only.

Page 3, column 2.—The notes at bottom of column refer to the table of occupation.

On page 7, column 2, the last line of paragraph 3 should read, total "occupied" area."

Page 16, column 2.—On line 17 from bottom, "extensive" should read "intensive."

Page 21.—Doubt has been cast on the accuracy of the assumption that 530 individuals, families, or corporations own one-half (12,000,000 acres) of the alienated lands of Victoria. There is no need to push the point. It is bad enough to know, beyond the shadow of a doubt, from the "Land Tax Register" that—

113 individuals, families, banks, loan, mortgage, and finance companies OWN AT LEAST 5,294,000 acres, and we know for the reasons set forth on page

20, that these 116 own much more than the large estates shown on the register. This is quite enough for the opponent of land monopoly. It is well-known that the various banks and other financial corporations, over and beyond the large estates appearing on the Register in their names, also own a large number of small agricultural properties throughout the State, that are let out on the time-payment system in good seasons, and pulled back with a mortgage sucker in periods of depression.

Page 24. The map shows the Birchip West water channel, between the Hope town and Mildura lines, but name has been accidentally omitted.

Page 32, column 2, line 5, the word "cinder" should read "crude," and on line 11 from the bottom, "Trantham" is a mis-print for "Tatham."

On map No. 1, the figures 2117 should be 2317. The accuracy of the map has been questioned. It is sufficient to say it is based upon maps and records in the Land Tax Office. Accuracy of outline of each estate and the exact relation of one estate to another could not be shown on such a small map without rendering it unintelligible. It was, therefore, not attempted. How mammoth properties "dominate" and depopulate a valuable territory that is shown—that is indisputable.

